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SHADOWLAND MAGAZINE

#7

FERRIGNO'S HULK

THE EVIL DEAD

THEY'LL SWALLOW YOUR SOUL!

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APOCALYPSE CINEMA

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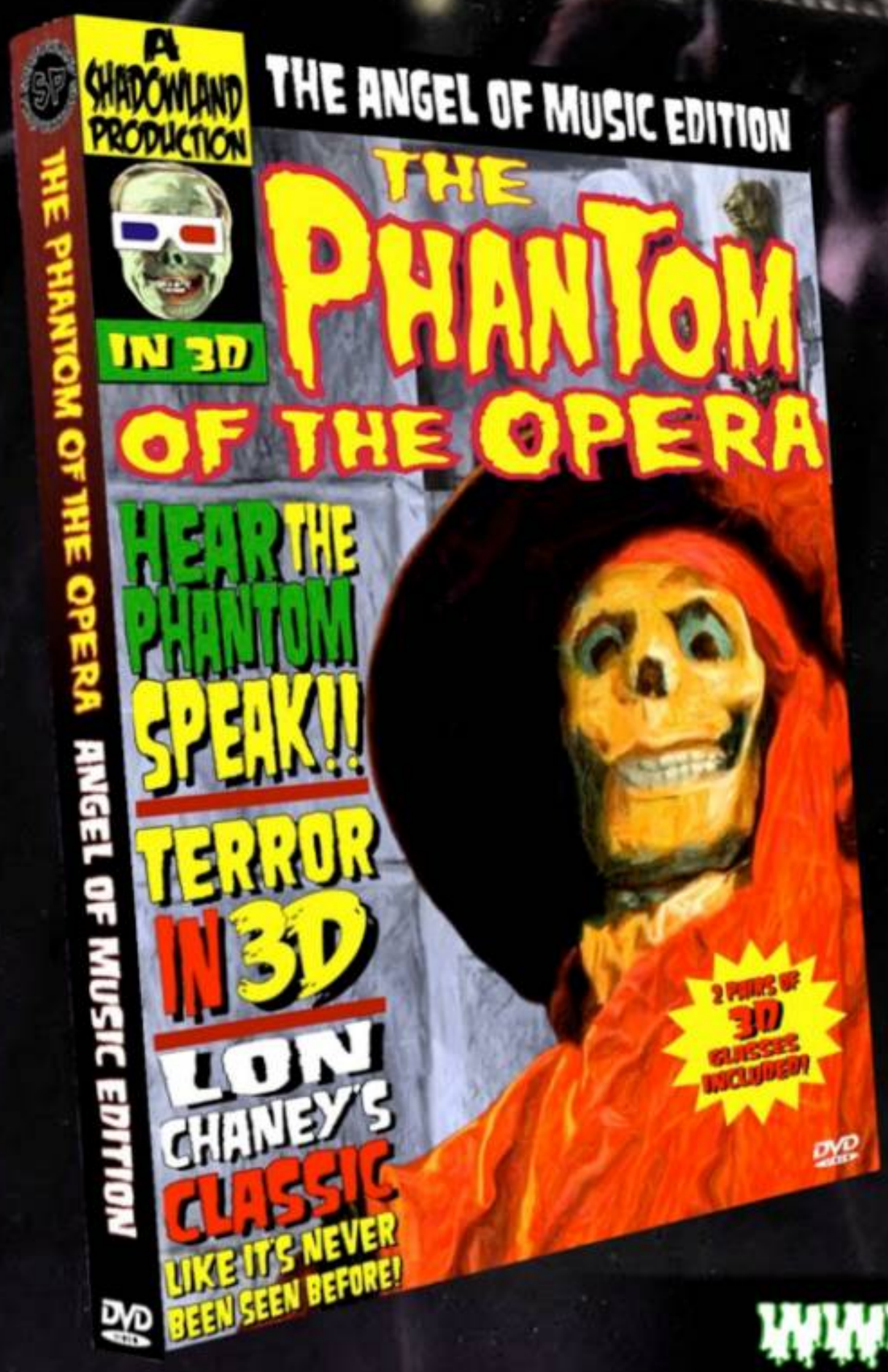

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DREADITORIAL

Last issue our cover was decorated with some brazen text affirming that, "We Go Mad for Mad Monster Party!" While we certainly still stand by that remark, there are other topics that can get us a tad enthusiastic too. Though this edition's cover doesn't state it, it may be wholly evident that "We Go Ape for Apocalypse Cinema!" As I write this at the start of a newfangled year (Happy New Year, by the way!) it's safe to say that the supposed 2012 apocalypse was averted. We've survived – for now, at least – but if there's anything the magic of cinema has perfected, it's demonstrating the various ways humanity can meet its untimely end…strangely a number of these also involve Charlton Heston as the lone survivor, but I digress.

Fittingly, our feature article this time around delves into the dystopian subgenre of film, examining its presence in the cinematic world and, moreover, how it often mirrors the ever-changing political and social trends. All the major films are covered, along with some lesser known, but equally significant, gems. And that's not all – Shadowland's foray into the celluloid apocalypse continues with a retrospective on the classic *Planet of the Apes* franchise.

Doom and dystopian gloom aside, no one really needs to worry because when the world is in danger we can always count on heroic masked wrestlers like Mil Mascaras to save the day! Bryan L. Yeatter sheds some lucha libre light on the recent Mil Mascaras films – Aztec mummies beware…

Next we're powering up over 9,000 as Derek Padula explores the symbolism and themes behind *Dragon Ball Z*, one of the most popular and iconic manga/anime franchises to burst out of Japan!

Considered traveling anytime soon? Perhaps you're looking to stay at a quaint, remote little getaway, nothing too fancy – maybe a nice family owned and operated establishment? Might we recommend the *Bates Motel*? We give an overview of the interesting 1987 television movie that portrayed the notorious *Psycho* location in a very different light.

And if motels aren't your thing, there's always quiet cabins, preferably deep in the woods. A good place to revisit *The Evil Dead*, join us…we'll supply the reading material (don't worry it's not bound in human flesh or written in blood – we had to save such embellishments for the latest edition of the Necronomicon Ex-Mortis).

While we're on the subject of things 'ghoulish' be sure to check out our overview on the life of real ghoul Ed Gein, whose chilling legacy continues to echo through all areas of macabre fiction.

And if this issue's not *incredible* enough already, we take a much deserved look at *The Incredible Hulk* television show, starring the great Lou Ferrigno!

Excited yet? We'll let's jump in – the apocalypse is here!

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Cover Art: Humans beware! Dwayne Pinkney's fearsome General Ursus from *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* is ready to hunt down humans and subway-dwelling mutants alike! Dwayne Pinkney is available for commissions at DPinkneyArt@hotmail.com – more of his phenomenal artwork can also be seen at www.ShadowlandMagazine.com.

Back Cover: Mr. Pinkney follows up one masterpiece with another...this time Lou Ferrigno's Hulk, magnificently rendered in all his raging glory. *Hulk smash*!

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NEWS BITES

GAME OVER MAN, GAME OVER!

NECA will be releasing a new line of figures based on 1986's *Aliens*, complete with Colonial Marines (Hicks and Hudson) and a Xenomorph. Each figure will have over 30 points of articulation with the marines standing at around 7" tall and the Alien Warrior towering over 9" in height. NECA has announced an April/May 2013 shelf date.

MUSIC OF THE NIGHT

Creature Features has published a rewritten, revised, and expanded 2nd edition of *Musique Fantastique: 100 Years of Fantasy, Science-Fiction & Horror Film Music* by noted film music writer, Randall D. Larson. The first volume in the *Musique Fantastique* series was published last September as a limited edition trade paperback and an e-book, while the following books will be released in 2013. Visit www.MusiqueFantastique.com for more details. (*See our review in this issue!*)

IN THE NAME OF THE MOON

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the *Sailor Moon* manga, creator Naoko Takeuchi and publisher Kodansha have announced the production of a new anime series featuring the popular character. *Sailor Moon* is expectted to premiere in Japan during Summer 2013. Kodansha is also looking into the possibility of releasing the anime worldwide simultaneously.

Sailor Moon will be returning to television in 2013.

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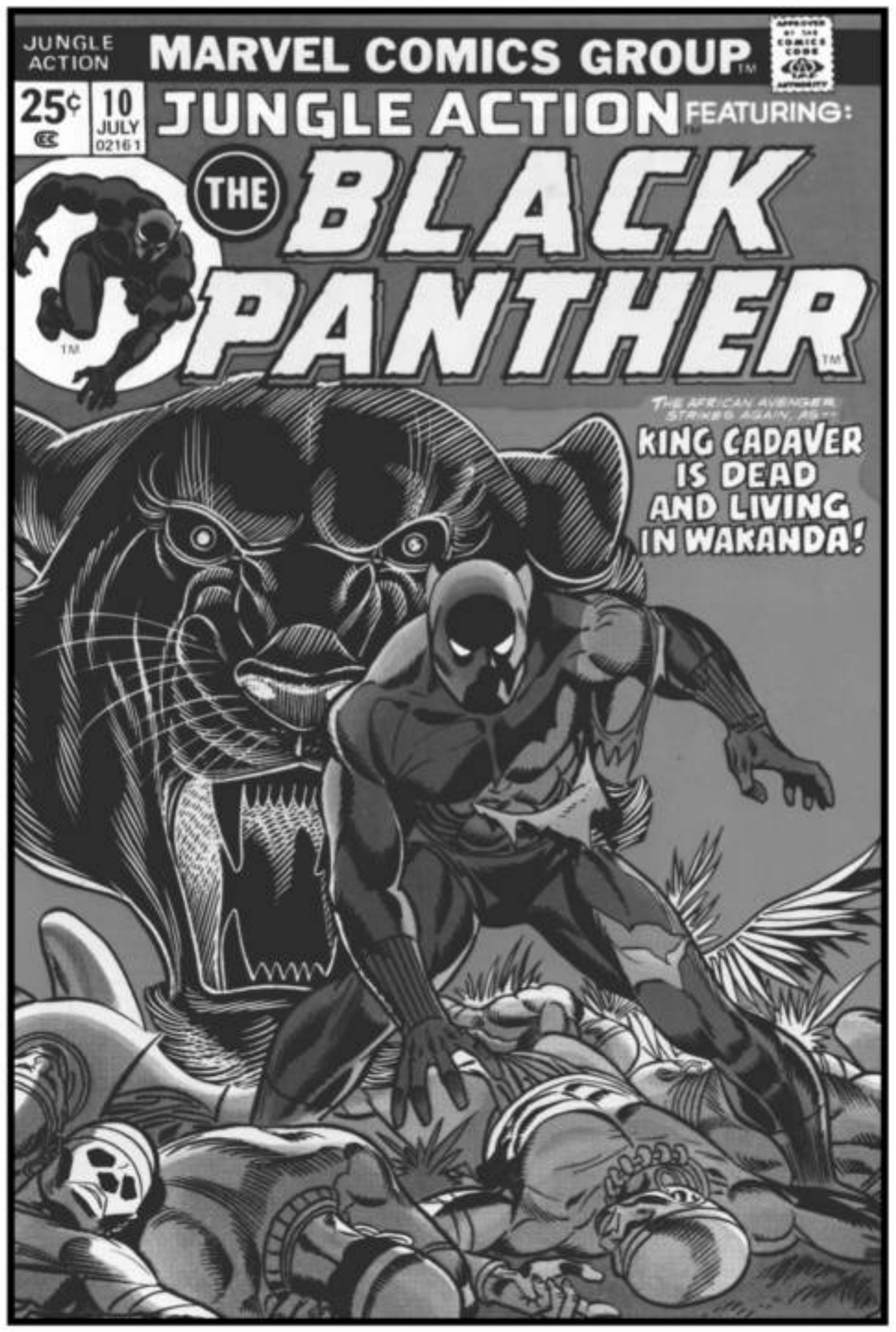


RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE

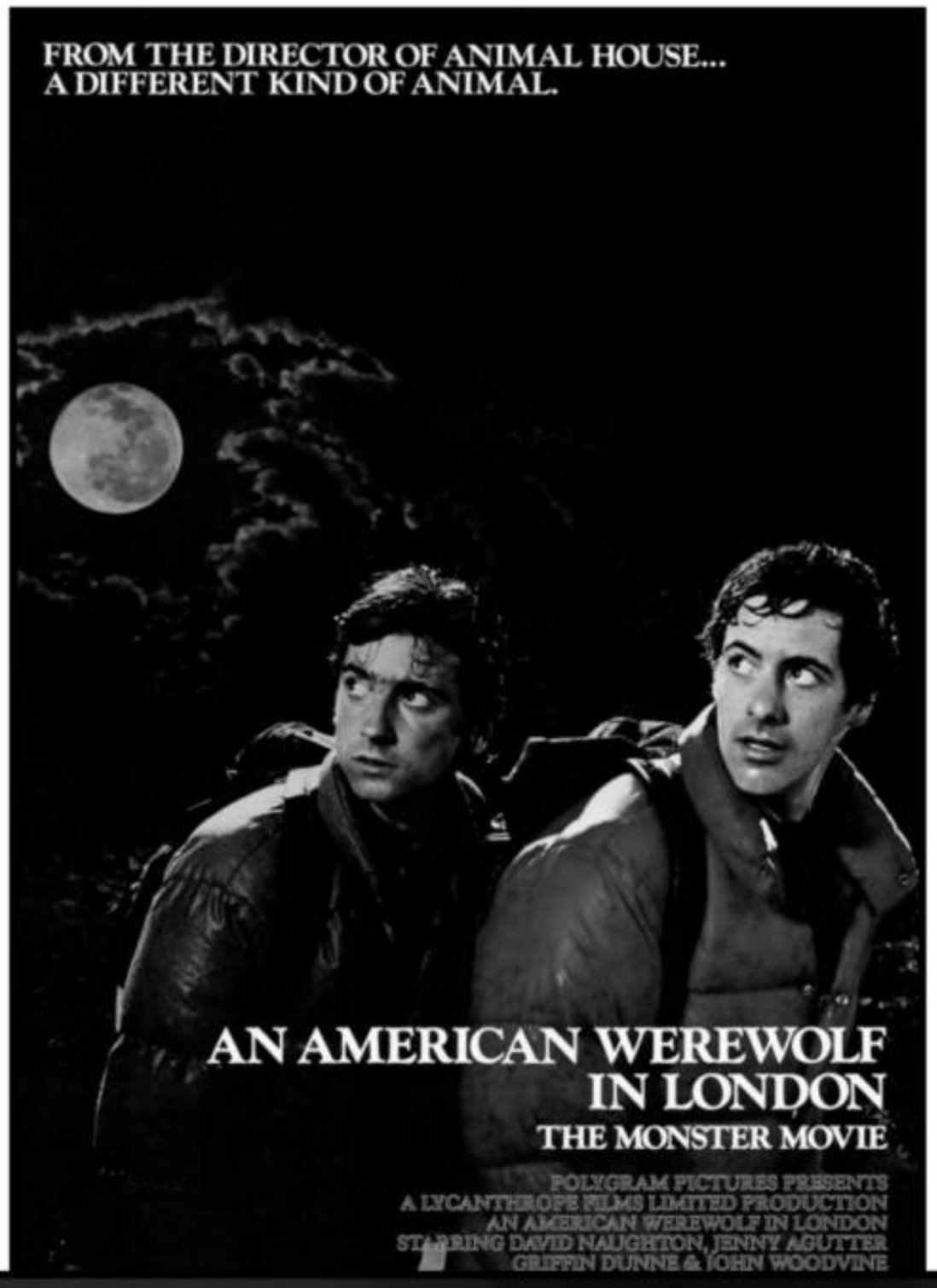
Marvel Studios is pushing for Wakanda's greatest warrior, the Black Panther, to get a film of his own. A script is in the works and a 2014 release date is expected.

THEY'RE TROUBLE...

Captain Kirk once had his hands full with the troublesome Tribbles but now, for the first time, *Star Trek* fans can get their hands on these furry little guys. Manufactured by Diamond Select, Tribbles will be 6-inches, available in beige, gray and brown and have authentic sound and motion features. You can be the proud owner of a Tribble in June 2013, just don't feed them...they've been known to overrun Federation starships in the past.

KEEP OFF THE MOORS

The remake trend continues with Furst Film's re-imagining of the 1981 horror-comedy, *An American Werewolf in London*. Fernley Phillips (*The Number 23*) will be writing the script. A 2014 release is planned.



A COMIC FAN'S DREAM COME TRUE

Edited by John Rovnak, *Panel to Panel: Exploring Words & Pictures Volume 1* is a 272 page, full-color collection of interviews, essays, comics and articles exploring the industry and culture of comic books and graphic novels. Interviews include Alan Moore, Mark Bode, Glenn Danzig, James Kochalka, Jimmy Gownley, Charles Glaubitz, Steve Murphy, Rick Veitch, Jim Woodring, Craig Yoe, and many more. *Panel to Panel* can be purchased in ebook or physical formats. Visit www.PaneltoPanel.net for more information.

FOUND FOOTAGE FRIGHTS

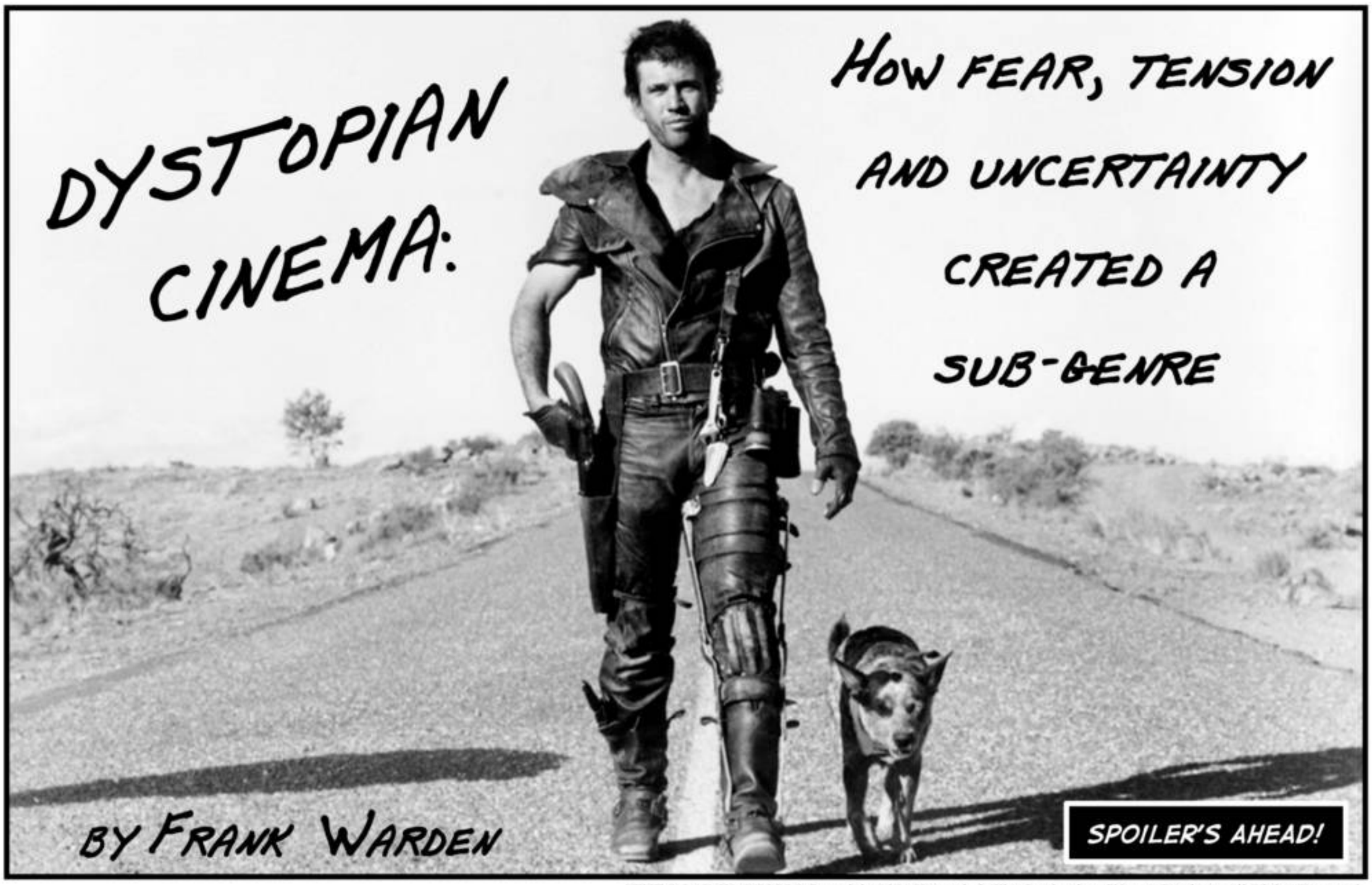
Capitalizing on the success of its predecessors, *Paranormal Activity 5* has been pushed into development and is being readied for an October 25th, 2013 release. No plot details are yet known.

THE MERC WITH A MOUTH GETS HIS OWN VIDEO GAME

High Moon Studios, the developer behind *Transformers: War for Cybertron* and *Fall of Cybertron*, will be giving Marvel Comics' finest mercenary the video game treatment. The game is scheduled for the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 platforms in mid 2013.

DYSTOPIAN CINEMA:

HOW FEAR, TENSION AND UNCERTAINTY CREATED A SUB-GENRE



"THE ROAD WARRIOR" Copyright 1981 Kennedy Miller Productions/Warner Brothers. All Rights Reserved.

Vestiges of a once great city stretch on for as far as the eye can see. Towering skyscrapers have been reduced to pillars of rubble. Charred vehicles rest overturned in the street. Fractured skeletal remains lay about, forgotten testaments to humanity's dark future. The preceding allegory presents a bleak world inundated with misery and death; a dystopia.

As a society, humankind seems to be fascinated with its own future and, even more so, with its subsequent demise. This morose attraction is far from just a modern allure and can be traced back to scriptures of Biblical 'End Times', Nostradamus' prophecies, or the 2012 doomsday predictions that coincided with the end of the Mayan calendar.

Such repeated foretelling of a prospected apocalypse raises the question, why is it that humanity has always been so enthralled with total annihilation? Maybe it's because somewhere deep within the human subconscious we known that, as a direct result to our warlike nature, absolute destruction is assured.

In his book, *Visions of the Apocalypse*, Wheeler Winston Dixon states that, "Indeed, as a culture, we seem tired with life…there is, after all, something comforting in the thought of imminent destruction. All bets are off, all duties executed, all responsibilities abandoned" (2). While for some, there may be such elements of comfort associated with 'the end', there also exists another side to Dixon's argument. An apocalypse may not altogether obliterate the world, but purge it into a full scale dystopia, teeming with overpopulation, disease, famine, and anarchy. In such a scenario there may still be duties, responsibilities and, in addition, widespread suffering.

Humanity's greatest obsessions frequently stem from the unknown; could a fixation of the apocalypse stem from fear? Moreover, a fear of an uncertain future? Often, the human condition needs to relocate its subconscious terrors and thoughts of dread into other mediums – a method of not dealing with the issues or tribulations at hand.

Examples of post-modern apocalyptic societies flood the descriptive field of literature, yet they present a particularly visual wonderland for the world of film. The theme of dystopian society has been a frequent one in cinema, one that not only conveys a cultural message, but expresses the fears, anxieties, and tensions of the era. James Berger states in his book, *After the End: Representations of Post-Apocalypse*, that apocalyptic depictions on film relate to real-life historical catastrophes and, in this way, succeeds in engaging the viewer on a psychoanalytical level (19).

James Combs, a political scientist, argues in his essay, *Pox-Eclipse Now: The Dystopian Imagination in Contemporary Popular Movies*, that the dystopian world is culturally ripe for cinema (26). In many cases, the dystopian societies found in film mirror the direction in which our own is advancing towards. Combs uses America as a primary example, where myths of a benevolent democracy, shared economic progress/prosperity, and secure cultural norms are more volatile than ever before.

For decades, large sections of the population have been alienated from the rest of the country, often those who fit outside the status quo; even further, the political spectrum has shifted to include what Combs refers to as "symbolic politics" and a "pervasive

phoniness" that amounts to little more than a proliferation of mass media/political-induced 'bullshit' (20). In analyzing the turbulent political arena, it becomes easy to agree, seeing as how politics exceed in one area in-particular, to offer up such confusing babble that the average citizen is never really sure what the intended political message was to begin with.

In the book, *Apocalypse Movies: End of the World Cinema*, Kim Newman contends that, "Giant, radioactive, skyscraper-eating monsters were not the problem. In movie after movie, politics and politicians were the real monsters…stabbing big red buttons and upsetting property value worldwide" (10).

Before continuing, an important question must be answered. Why would society choose cinema, the expanse of the silver screen, as an outlet for their innermost fears? One answer could be because of the ritualistic nature of seeing a film with a gathering of people in a darkened place; a storytelling process of congregating 'around a fire' that harkens back to humanity's base roots. In the *Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell refers to the movie theater as a spiritual temple that creates icons and myths, while the television purely creates celebrities.

Another answer may be that cinema alone has the power to closely blur the lines between reality and fiction. An interesting quote concerning cinema is found in chapter 29 of Robert Pirsig's fictional novel, *Lila*: "The theater's a form of hypnosis. So are movies… when you enter a movie theater you know that all you're going to see is 24 shadows per second flashed on a screen to give an illusion of moving people and objects. Yet despite this knowledge you laugh when the 24 shadows per second tell jokes and cry when the shadows show actors faking death. You know they are an illusion yet you enter the illusion and become part of it…this is hypnosis. It is a trance…but it's also a powerful force for cultural reinforcement and for this reason the culture promotes movies and censors them for its own benefit."

Cinema has become deeply ingrained within the human consciousness, just as literature, music, and theatre had been centuries before; realizing this, it becomes logical that the human psyche would bestow the celluloid realm with blueprints for society's ultimate demise. To fully grasp the lineage of dystopian cinema, one must take a look back at the turmoil of the eras that spawned these films. Each decade offered its view of a possible dystopian outcome, each reflective of the current events of that time period.

Nuclear Nightmares and the King of the Monsters

From the 1950's onward, dystopian subject matter has been a prevalent theme in the world of film. However, this is not to say that earlier cinematic works were devoid of the subject. Fritz Lang's silent masterpiece, *Metropolis* (1927), proved to be the first depiction of a cinematic dystopia. Lang's film presents a futuristic city set in the year 2026, where two kinds of societies live. On the above levels are the elite city planners, called the Thinkers. On the lower, more industrialized levels, exist the working class who are unable to rise above the misery of their lives. *Metropolis* is a work very much born of its time; it was produced in a period of severe economic woes across the globe, both in the film's native Germany and the Depression-era United States. The symbolism of the workers represents the poor, penniless masses, while the rich and wealthy were still, figuratively and literally, living at the top of the food chain.

In *Metropolis* the nightmarish society is led by a faux-capitalism (interesting point of note that in 1927 the capitalist system was on the verge of failing in America). The threat of industrialism and advancements of technology were at the forefront of Lang's film, and without question, the turn of the century had brought its

METROPOLIS
Directed by FRITZ LANG
UFA
Paramount Pictures

Mad Machine: Technology usurping humanity and transhumanism were evident in 1927's *Metropolis*.

share of technological advancements. The film's most memorable aspect came in the guise of Futura, the robot female destined to stand in as a mechanical replica of Maria, the lone voice of hope to the working class. The allegory of machine replacing man is a constant one in dystopian narratives, one that gains momentum in the 1980's forward, where mechanized cyborgs return from the future and computers become advance enough to create and subvert reality.

Between *Metropolis*' debut in 1927 and the 1950's, the dystopian theme in cinema had been somewhat muted. With World War II in full swing, the danger of *global* annihilation had still not become readily conceivable. Instead, the imminent threat had fallen to the Nazis and Japanese – the risk was relegated to the sovereignty and freedom of individual countries, a conflict someone would inevitably win, instead of an outright endgame for the human race.

With the splitting of the atom, the creation of the atomic bomb, and the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the world had forever changed. Humanity had finally created a singular weapon that could not only eradicate lives on a widened scale, but turn the planet into a perpetual graveyard of radioactive ruin.

Films of the 1920's, 1930's, and 1940's varied in degree from themes of war, patriotism, gangsters, spy thrillers and man-made-monsters. The fifties ushered in a post-war age with revitalized lifestyle and 'new' economy. The postwar boom was rationalized as a type of multinational capitalism, full of modernization and a growth of consumer society.

The nuclear family was being forged and America rose up to share the mantle as world superpower. Still, new threats loomed on the horizon. The Nazis and Japanese were defeated, but the Soviet Union proved to be a suitable replacement. Communism posed several newfound issues, for one it was viewed as a risk to capitalism and the Russian's nuclear capacity rivaled America's own, creating a push-and-pull relationship of near misfires and adverted conflicts that defined the Cold War.

In a blistering blast of nuclear-charged energy and

The "Fat Man" atomic bomb, a symbol of the nuclear age.

postwar mentality, the 1950's atomic family was born, and with it, an ever-ominous threat of impending disaster. Nuclear power, the horrific resolution to the Second World War, and a potential new energy source, proved to not only be humanity's savior, but the potential harbinger of its demise. The risk was large and Hollywood mirrored life by creating even larger monstrosities for the silver screen. David J. Skal exclaims in his book, *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror*, that, "Oversized radioactive monsters were lightning rods for atomic-war anxiety, and one of the most successful and imitated Hollywood formulas since the Western" (248).

A slew of irradiated horrors spewed onto the movie screen, all generated by the aftereffects of nuclear testing. Even the smallest and nominal creatures were transformed into hell-spawned beasts from the darkest recesses of the imagination. For example, enlarged, man-eating ants wrecked havoc in *Them!* (1954), and massive locusts swarmed Chicago in *Beginning of the End* (1957). These were just a few instances in the 'giant killer insect' sub-genre; others had far more overt titles: *Tarantula* (1955), *The Deadly Mantis* (1957), *Attack of the Crab Monsters* (1957), and *Earth Vs. The Spider* (1958). Insects were not the only creatures to feel the might of nuclear power; sleeping giants were on the verge of awakening from their prehistoric slumber. *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (1953) and *The Giant Behemoth* (1959) both depicted dinosaurs rising from suspended states of animation to spread mass amounts of chaos and carnage upon the modern world.

Japan sought to create an indirect remake of *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* in the guise of Ishiro Honda's *Gojira* (1954). The film would later be brought overseas, re-edited to star Raymond Burr in the equally iconic *Godzilla, King of the Monsters* (1956). The original *Gojira* was a stark contrast to many of the American films of the period. Science Fiction pictures like *Them!* and *Tarantula* depicted the horrors of what atomic energy gone amok could create but, in most cases, it never portrayed the casualties of the aftermath. *Gojira*, a film produced in the only country to ever experience the terror of

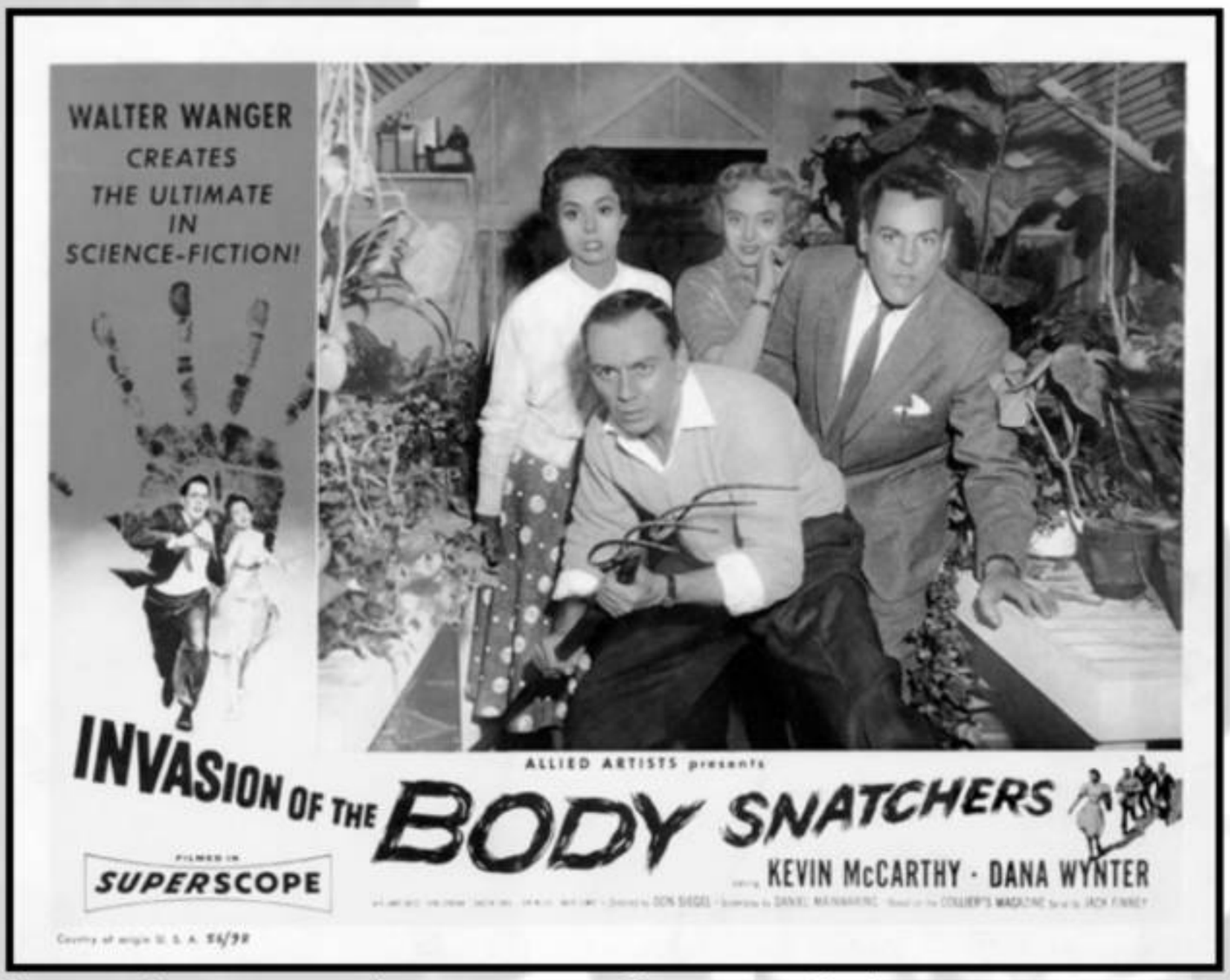
nuclear devastation, held nothing back.

In the original Japanese version of *Gojira*, scenes of human suffering are paramount, including one moment when a little girl is tested for radiation poisoning. Another eerie and disturbing scene occurs when a terrified mother and daughter stand in an alleyway, awaiting their imminent demise, to which the mother calms her daughter by saying, "You'll be with your father soon." These scenes, as well as many that showcase the misery of human victims, were cut from the American release.

Between the shadowy, black and white imagery of Tokyo in flames and the haunting score by Akira Ifukube, *Gojira* presented more than just a prehistoric monster running rampant, the beast itself was the atomic bomb personified. Unlike the title threat in *The Deadly Mantis* or the monstrous octopus in *It Came from Beneath the Sea* (1955), Gojira can not be stopped by standard military war machines. In fact, never once in the film is the monster hurt or suffers injury; instead it tears through the city with the inescapable onslaught of a living hydrogen bomb. By the end of the film the creature stopped, but only after a special weapon, the Oxygen Destroyer, is invented and utilized.

When *Gojira's* American counterpart, *Godzilla, King of the Monsters* migrated to the West, it became a hit, grossing an impressive $2 million in less than two years. Despite much of the film's message being lightened through the editing process, the overall meaning could not be negated. Rick Hansen states in his article, *Which Came First, The Monster or the Bomb?,* that: "Ultimately, Godzilla is the United States' atomic bomb. In the guise of a typical monster movie, Ishiro Honda made Japan, and eventually the world, experience the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki all over again" (22). The character of Godzilla would eventually become an icon, spawning the giant Japanese monster genre called *Kaiju Eiga*, which included such radioactive beasts as *Rodan* (1956) and *Mothra* (1961).

The effects of nuclear energy could not only enrage nature and awaken inactive behemoths, but could even turn the average human into a monster. *The Amazing Colossal Man* (1957), *The Cyclops* (1957), *The Incredible Shrinking Man* (1957), and *Attack of the Fifty Foot Woman* (1958) each portrayed a type of human transformation into something 'inhuman'. An interesting side note is how the heroes of these films are represented – in most cases the protagonist is either a scientist or involved in some capacity with the military. Both seem reasonable in retrospect, seeing as



how science was the creator of many of these monstrosities, therefore the cause of the problem must in some way go hand-in-hand with the solution. The military aspect stems from the unquestioning patriotism of the era, which emulates a loyal militaristic mindset of following orders and obeying commands.

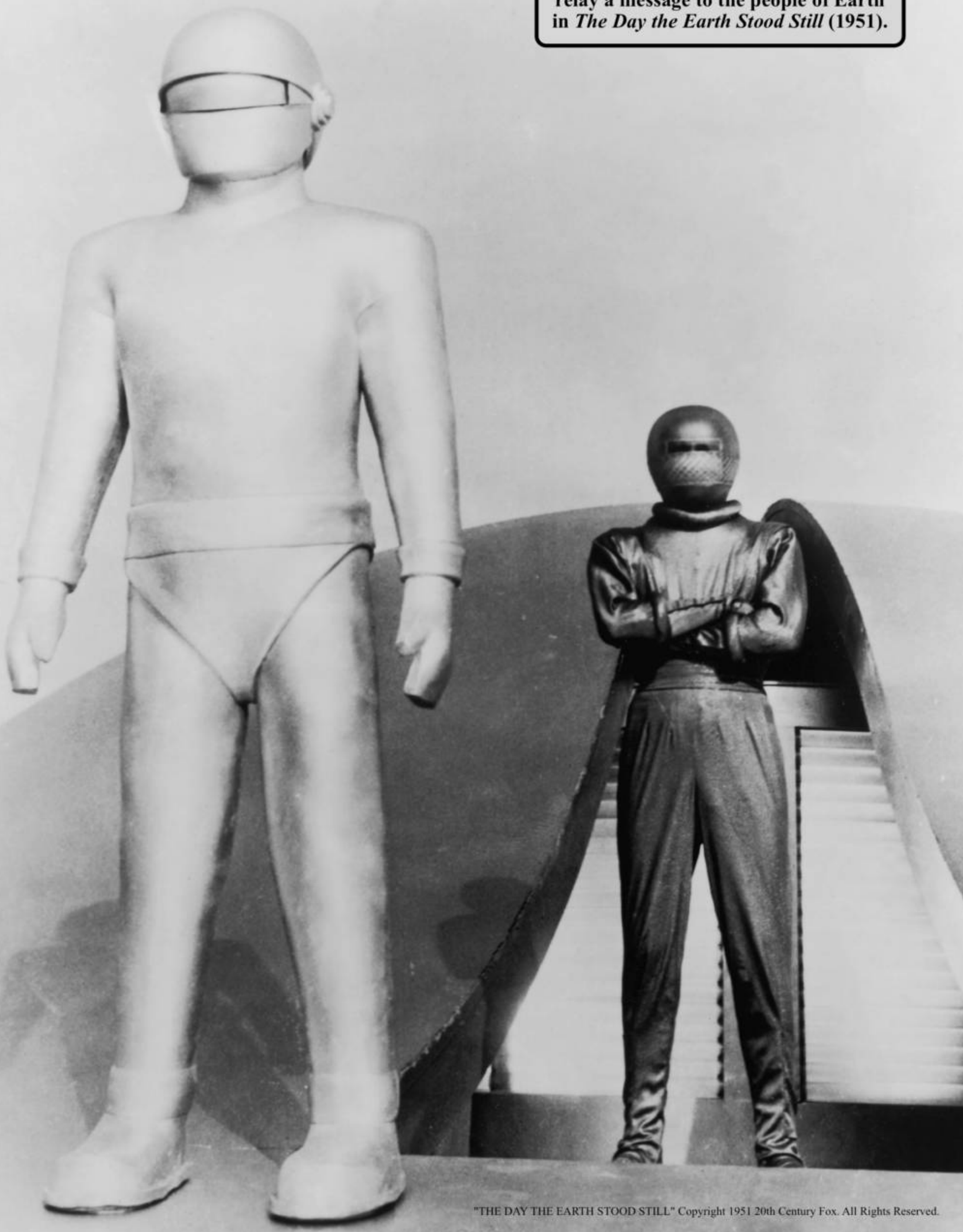
The atomic 'freak of nature' was not the only impending hazard of the fifties. McCarthyism was in full swing and so was the 'Red scare', Communism had been knocking on America's door and a startling question was raised: who can *you* trust? With Communists supposedly infiltrating the country, everyone from friends, neighbors, to family had become suspect. No film better portrays these elements of paranoia better than Don Siegel's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), where alien invaders aim to secretly replace the human population with imposters of their own design. The film's meaning is not at all muted in its relation to America's fear of covert Communist sympathizers and spies. Another film that replaces the Communist threat with one of extraterrestrial origin is *Invaders from Mars* (1953), which sees a young boy's parents and town taken over by alien mind control.

In both films, the alien invasion is not directly eliminated – in actuality, both end with the knowledge that the threat is still very much alive. *Invasion of the Body Snatchers'* conclusion is particularly pessimistic, while *Invaders from Mars'* dream-like finale, followed by a grim repeating reality, sets out to prove that this is a danger not to be ignored. Yet, both films portray a sense of promise that we, as Americans, may overcome the 'invasion', or combat it to some extent. Combs states that, "…the powerful threat from the surrogate Red hordes was always great and menacing…with at least the hope that the status quo of American normalcy would be restored, however tenuously" (23).

Robert Wise's *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), presented a different kind of warning and was far removed from the standard fare of the time. The film addressed atomic energy in the guise of an alien visitor. Unlike those in *This Island Earth* (1955) or *Invasion of the Saucer Men* (1957), the visitor in question, Klaatu, is benevolent. He delivers an ultimatum not directed to the Soviet Union or the United States, but a warning to the world. In what is the penultimate example of 1950's era fears and anxieties, Klaatu warns: "The universe grows smaller every day, and the threat of aggression by any group, anywhere, can no longer be tolerated…I came here to give you these facts. It is no concern of ours how you run your own planet, but if you threaten to extend your violence, this Earth of yours will be reduced to a burned-out cinder. Your choice is simple: join us and live in peace, or pursue your present course and face obliteration. We shall be waiting for your answer. The decision rests with you."

They Blew it Up! A World Gone Ape

The tune of atomic energy shifted in the 1960's from one of nuclear mutants and monsters to that of human horrors – and when it came to celluloid catastrophes, mankind reigned supreme. No longer



Klaatu barada nikto!
Klaatu (right) and Gort (left) relay a message to the people of Earth in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951).

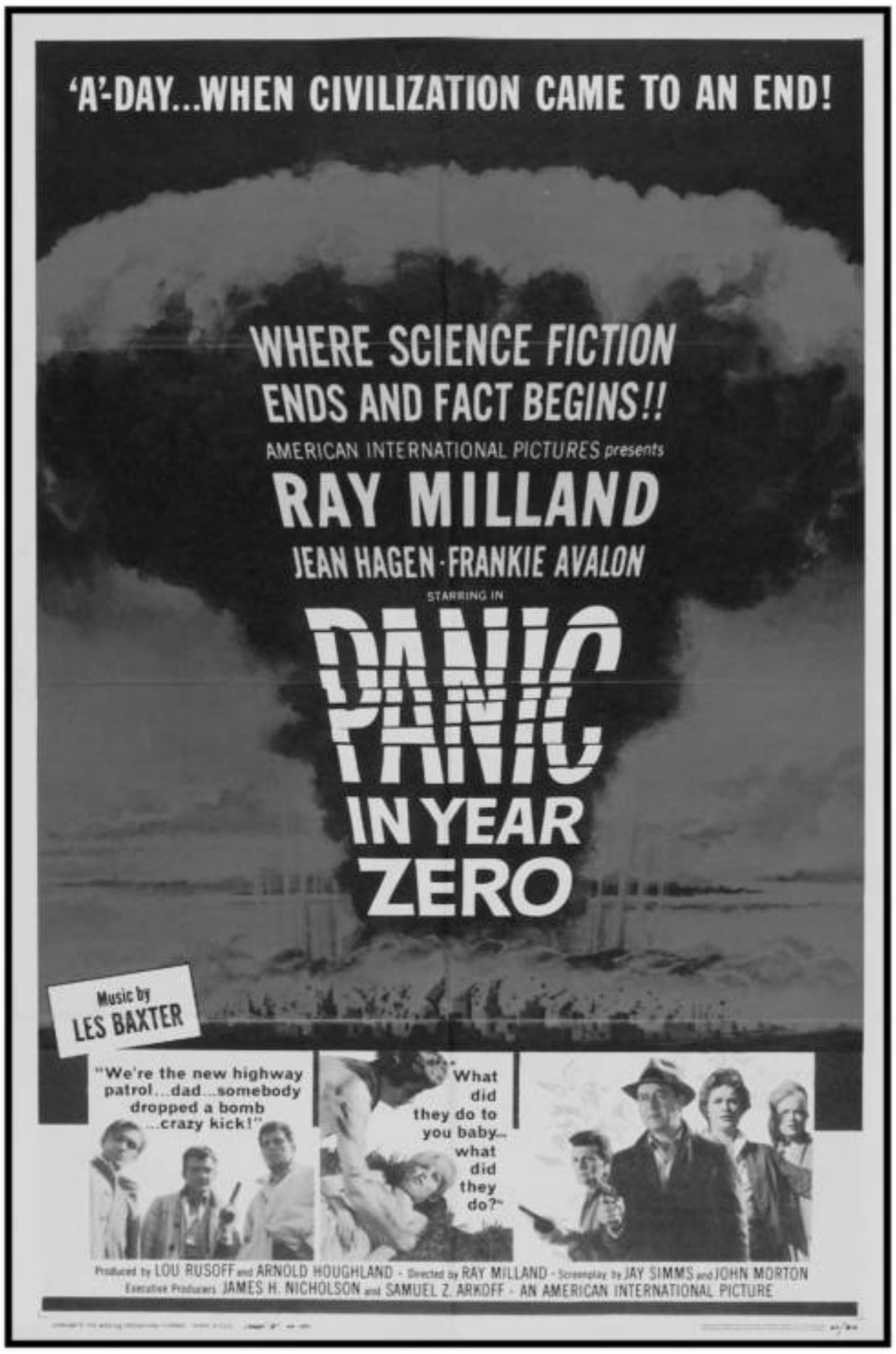
"THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL" Copyright 1951 20th Century Fox. All Rights Reserved.

were the scientists and military our saviors and no longer were the dangers extraterrestrial. The dystopian-outcome had been relocated to a more personal level. With the space race kicking into high gear, the Cuban Missile Crisis barely averted, the steady growth of Communism, the Kennedy assassination, and the nearing Vietnam War, the values of the fifties were quickly changing. Mutated beasties and malevolent space visitors were not the dominant concern; it soon became even more clear that the greatest threat to mankind's survival was, in fact, ourselves.

Contrasting the fifties, which prided itself with family values and the idyllic suburban model, the sixties became the first signifier for the 'dysfunctional family' (Skal 281). The vast difference was that the sixties era of dystopian cinema lacked both a sense of hope and eventual victory, especially when faced with the threat of total extermination. Compare this to the fifties when science and military might were ultimately able to prevent mass destruction and, in some way, avert global disaster. This led to many dytsopian films of the sixties to adopt far bleaker outcomes than their predecessors.

Shuei Matsubayashi's *The Last War* (1961) portrays a Cold War-era world constantly tethering on the doorstep of a nuclear-driven apocalypse. The climax of the film delivers the catastrophe with a spectacular special-effects tour de force in which every major city in the world is wiped out. The finale is hopelessly bleak when the few remaining survivors choose to simply give up and die among the radioactive wasteland.

Panic in Year Zero! (1962), starring Ray



Milland, sees a nuclear attack on American soil within the first act of the film. Produced on the cheap by American International Pictures, *Panic in Year Zero!* is as much a survivalist film as it is an apocalyptic one. The film follows the plight of a family as they are thrust against the brutality of a world on the brink of collapse. Surprisingly brutal for the time the film was created, the family has to deal with the rape of their teenage daughter at the hands of a gang, along with an increasingly mad assortment of characters equally hell-bent on surviving. By the film's conclusion the flustered family is able to return to some semblance of society, but one that is under martial law – and not after the father loses most of his humanity in the process. Wheeler describes *Panic in Year Zero!* as a key example of the 'bomb' paranoia of the sixties, along with carrying a strong pro-gun message, which was a relevant issue of the time. Even further, it signifies the last hurrah for the 'perfect' family of the fifties, visually and metaphorically ushering in the 'fractured' family to come.

No film tackles the sixties mindset better than *Planet Of The Apes* (1968), enveloping most of the issues of the era into a singular package. On the surface, the film captures then-current themes like civil-rights, national militancy, debates over animal testing, and the lingering concern of a cultural divide. These can be seen not just with the ape/human relations in the film, but amongst the ape society and subsequent class

structure therein. Charlton Heston's character, Taylor, becomes the only 'intelligent' human on a planet ruled by simian overlords. Yet, the film does well to show the primitive, animalistic side of man, portrayed no better than in the scene where Taylor tries to escape his ape captors. Throughout the scene, Heston's character climbs over monuments, crawls onto the floor to avoid detection, and runs about while the 'civilized' apes try to bring back order by catching what amounts to little more than a wild animal, a complete role reversal of species.

Written by *Twilight Zone* series creator, Rod Serling, *Planet of the Apes*' most memorable and shocking moment is the final gripping scene, where Taylor finds that the chaotic world he is stranded on is really the future Earth. The only ape with any knowledge of antiquated human history is Dr. Zaius, who cautions Taylor beforehand with the warning that, "...he may not like what he finds." Apparently, through nuclear war, humanity has reverted to a primitive state, giving way for apes to evolve in their place. The eerie symbolism of the Statue of Liberty demolished on the beach has become one of the greatest visuals of dystopian imagery. The statue represents not just a monument, but mankind's utmost beliefs in hope, freedom, equality, and the combined essence of human aspirations rusting away; yesterday's promise equals tomorrow's shattered remnant.

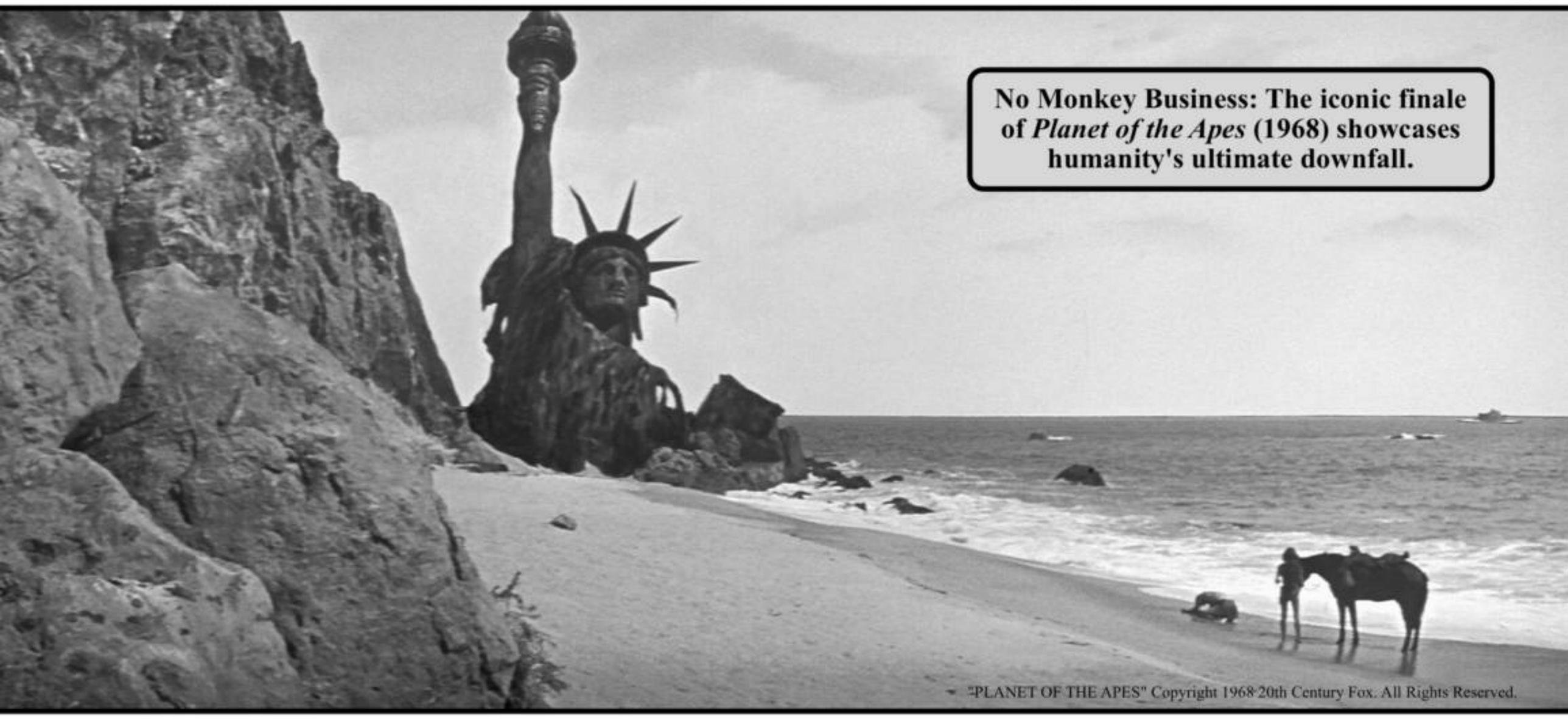
The sixties presented the peak of nuclear fear; however, after surviving the near-atomic obliteration of the thirteen-day Cuban missile crisis, the dread of the bomb was soon replaced by an even more imminent threat.

Don't Trust Anyone Over Thirty...Or the Government

Patriotism was dead. The family structure had disintegrated. The Cold War was heating up, and Communism had defeated Capitalism in Vietnam. America entered the seventies with a bang, for what would become one of the most turbulent decades in modern history. The counter-culture movement hit the ground running, resulting in radical new shifts in the hippie, punk, and rock and roll youth generation. A distrust of authority and the 'trust no one over thirty' attitude created an increasing cultural divide between the generations. The anti-government sentimentality of the period is easy to understand when taken into context, considering the lack of integrity so prevalent in the Nixon-era White House.

Whether it was lies, scams, or deceits, Nixon was notorious for it all; instances include him stating that graphic photographs of Vietnam casualties were faked, condemning anti-war protestors as 'anarchists', and that there was a 'Jewish stranglehold' on the media (Dixon 15). Even so, each of these examples had merely been a precursor to the Watergate scandal. Between the draft, peace-movements, and breakdown of 1950's American values, the public's uncertainties over nuclear eradication had been curbed, the greatest threat of all was our leaders' own misuse of power. Dixon states that, "All of these enterprises – the deceptions, the recreations, and the staged immolations – have one thing in common: they contain the seeds of their own destruction. Nixon was clearly eager to see himself implode, at some level, in front of an international audience" (16).

America's newfound acceptance of the bomb is no better represented than in *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* (1970). In the sequel, Charlton Heston must not only combat the likes of bloodthirsty primates, but square off against a horde of mutants who live below ground in the demolished subways of New York City. Unlike the apes who worship 'the Lawgiver', the mutants place their devotion in an unlikely effigy – an atomic bomb. At one point they even praise it, proclaiming: "Glory be to the bomb, and the holy Fallout," a signifier that humanity has come to recognize its fate and, instead of fearing



No Monkey Business: The iconic finale of *Planet of the Apes* (1968) showcases humanity's ultimate downfall.

"PLANET OF THE APES" Copyright 1968 20th Century Fox. All Rights Reserved.

it any longer, accepts the inevitable outcome in all its grandeur (Newman 181).

The fear of a corrupt government, however, was not so hushed. Richard Fleischer's dystopian tale, *Soylent Green* (1973), looks at human overpopulation coupled with the evil doings of both the corporate and government arenas. The film's star, Charlton Heston, is faced with overwhelming odds when he finds out that the Soylent Corporation is making their food product, Soylent Green, out of people. Fleischer's message concerning the expendability of the average American citizen in the eyes of a corrupt capitalist government hits a nerve when one looks at the Nixon presidency. This was a drastic change from the recurring communist threat of the fifties.

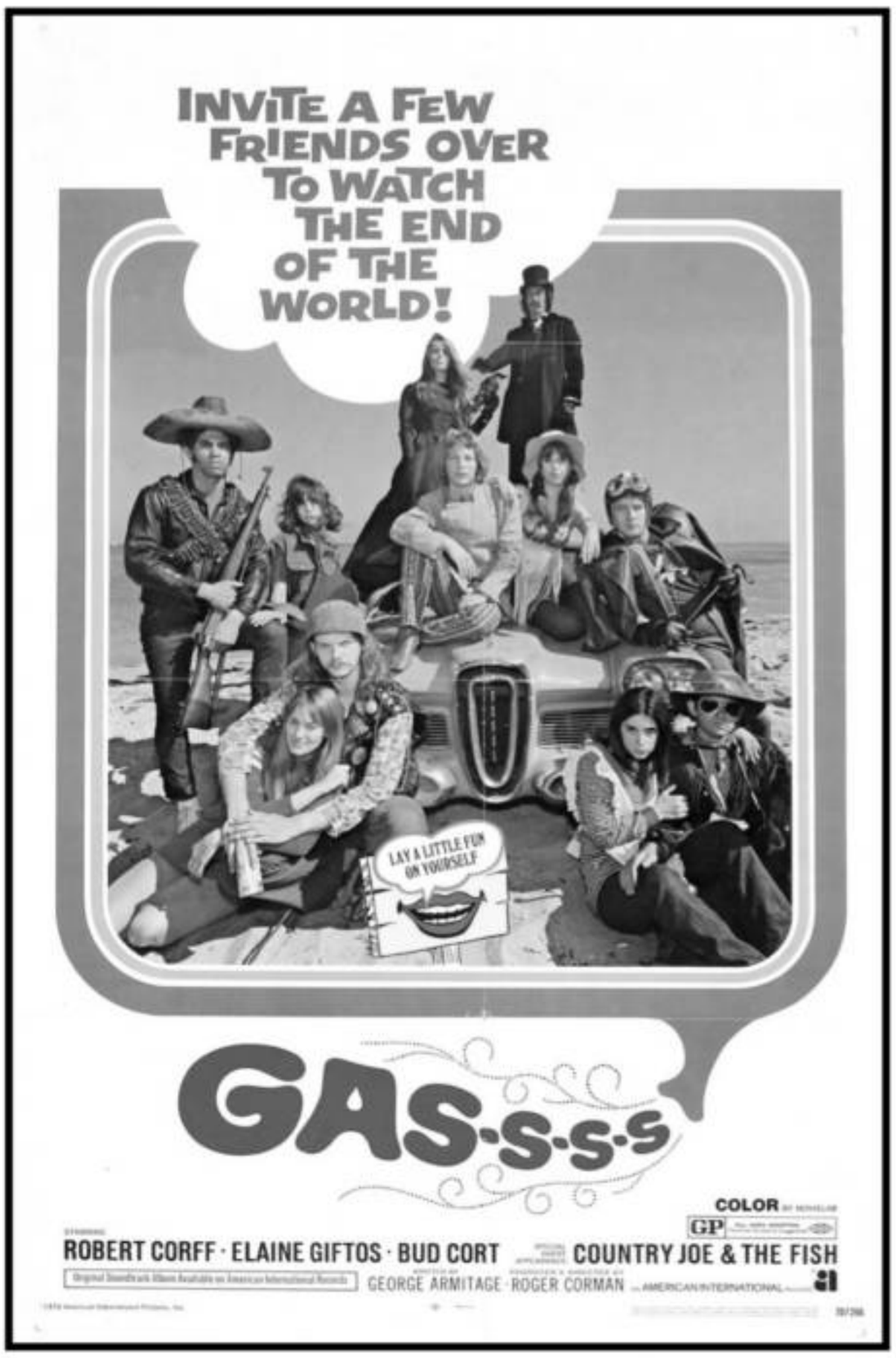
It would appear that out of the many dystopian films made during the sixties and seventies, no actor would be subjected to as many apocalyptic predicaments than that of Charlton Heston, who also would take the leading role in *The Omega Man* (1971), the second screen adaptation of Richard Matheson's novel, *I Am Legend*. *The Omega Man* is a striking depiction of youth culture rallied against the rest of the populace. Heston's character, who believes he is the

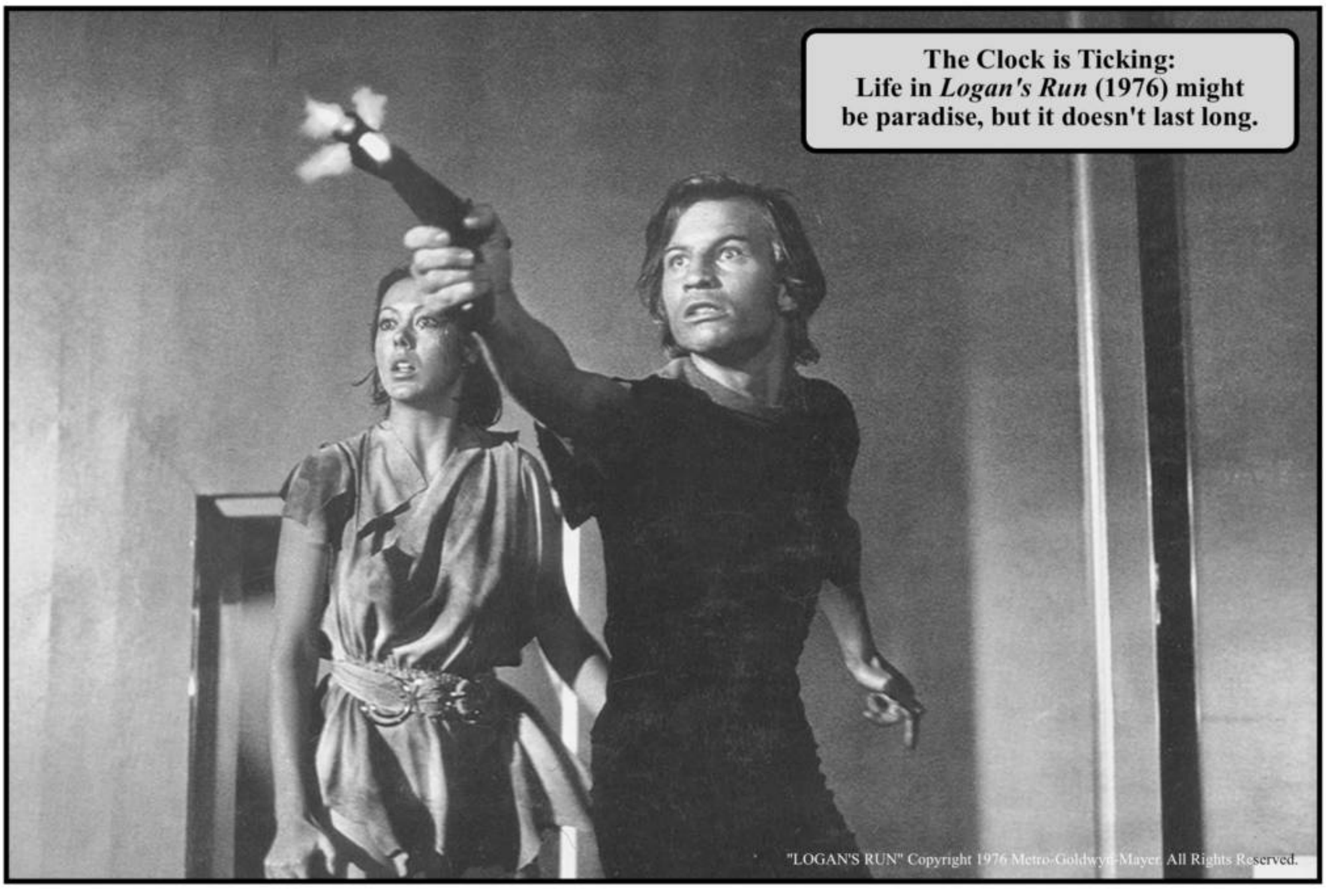
last man on earth (aside from a deformed mutants) finds a group of young neo-hippies living in the nearby wasteland. By the end of the film Heston sacrifices himself for the children, thus confirming that the future lies with the youth and, further cementing the notion on a cultural level, that 'youth is power'.

Not so much regarded for his artistic talents (sadly, his contributions to cinema are often grossly underrated), but renowned for turning a profit, Roger Corman took a shot at a hippie-influenced dytopia entitled *Gas-s-s-s, or Is It Really Necessary to Destroy the World in Order to Save It?* (1970), in which a mysterious gas kills anyone over the age of twenty-five. Again, the 'youth is power' case is made, and while the world is cleansed of the older generation and authority figureheads, chaos still ensues.

Logan's Run (1976) turns the dystopian formula on its head, presenting a utopian world where society thrives. Even so, there is one glaring disadvantage: to prevent the risk of overpopulation, life must end at the age of thirty. Here we have the issue of government mandates and control over its citizens and the collision of the generational gap. Michael York's character, Logan 5, is forced to flee the domed confines of 'paradise' in order to save his life. The film poses the ominous question, is a utopian paradise worth it, if your very freedoms are deprived in order to achieve it?

By the late seventies the effects of social collapse, economic woes, and oil shortages had plagued the Jimmy Carter presidency, culminating with the Iran hostage situation of an American embassy (Berger 156). It appeared as if even a first world society was not exempt from collapse, and with the sensationalist media preying on the public's every





WELCOME TO THE 23RD CENTURY.

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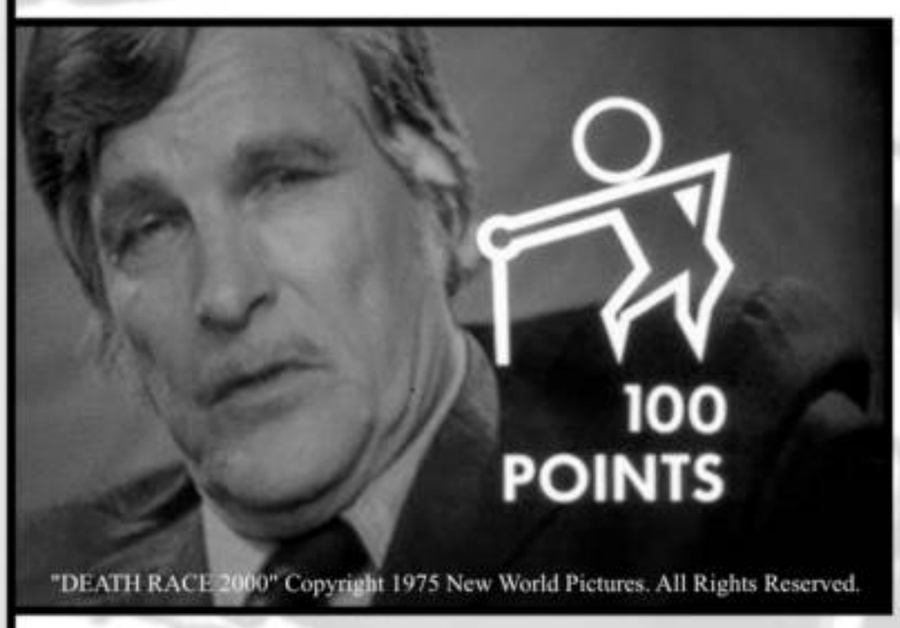
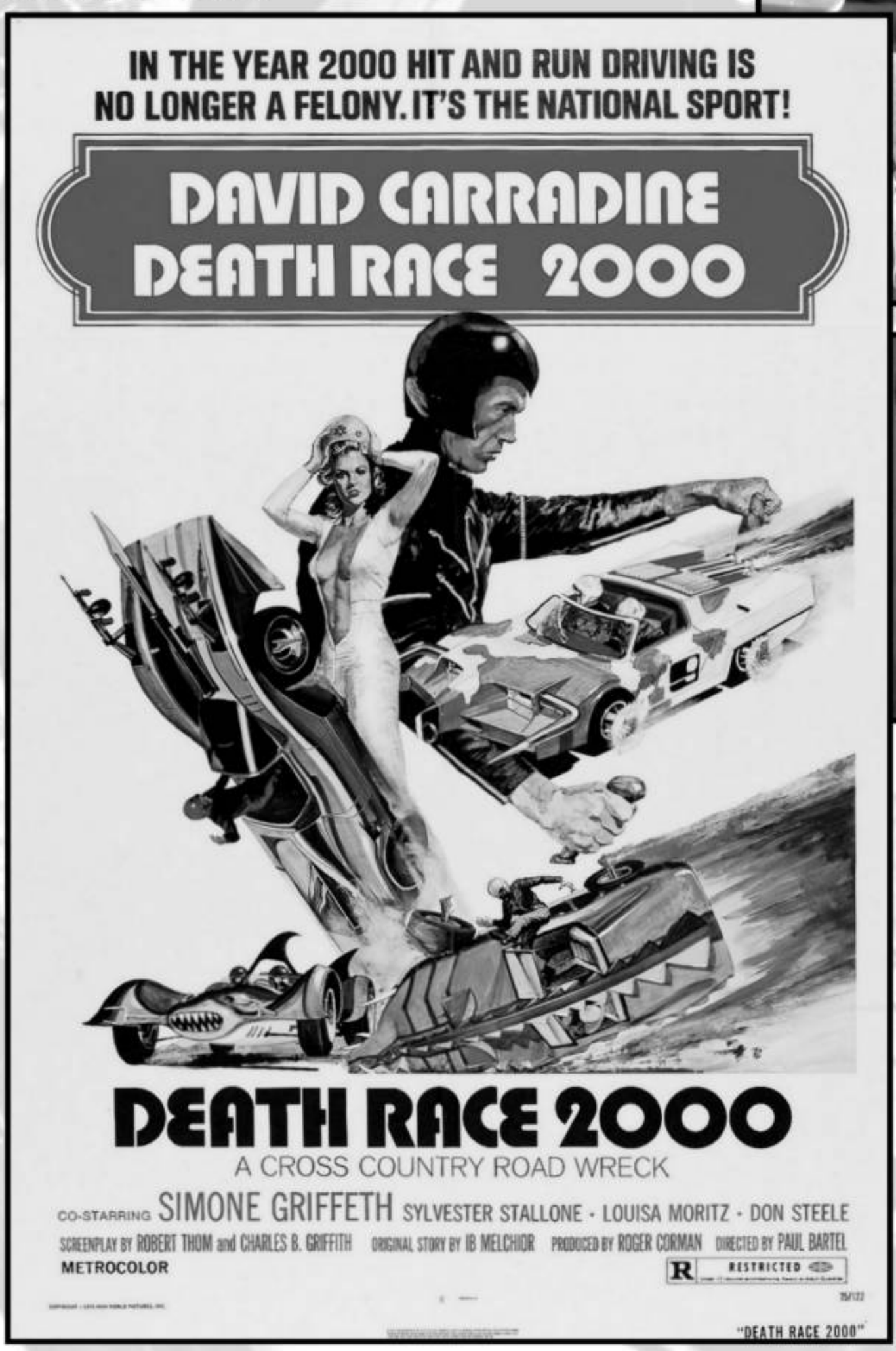
worry and doubt, the safety net was gone. Roger Corman's *Death Race 2000* (1975) looks at a world where both government action and public awareness has gone to hell. With many of the post-Vietnam imagery coming to the forefront, the question of a desensitized public was a very real fear that Corman captures with beautiful detail.

The events of *Death Race 2000* transpire in a dystopian world in which the only heroes and potential idols come from a deadly cross-country race. Points are earned for running down civilians along the way to the finish line. While partly campy, the film's dark humor is a stinging satire on mass culture and politics, ranging from the melodramatic news reporter to the overpowering government that not only condones acts of murder, but rewards it. The most distressing message in the film has to be the public's willingness to accept the horrors on display. Ironically, only David Carradine's character, Frankenstein, who is known as 'the world's greatest racer' and a national hero, sees the absurdity in the sport.

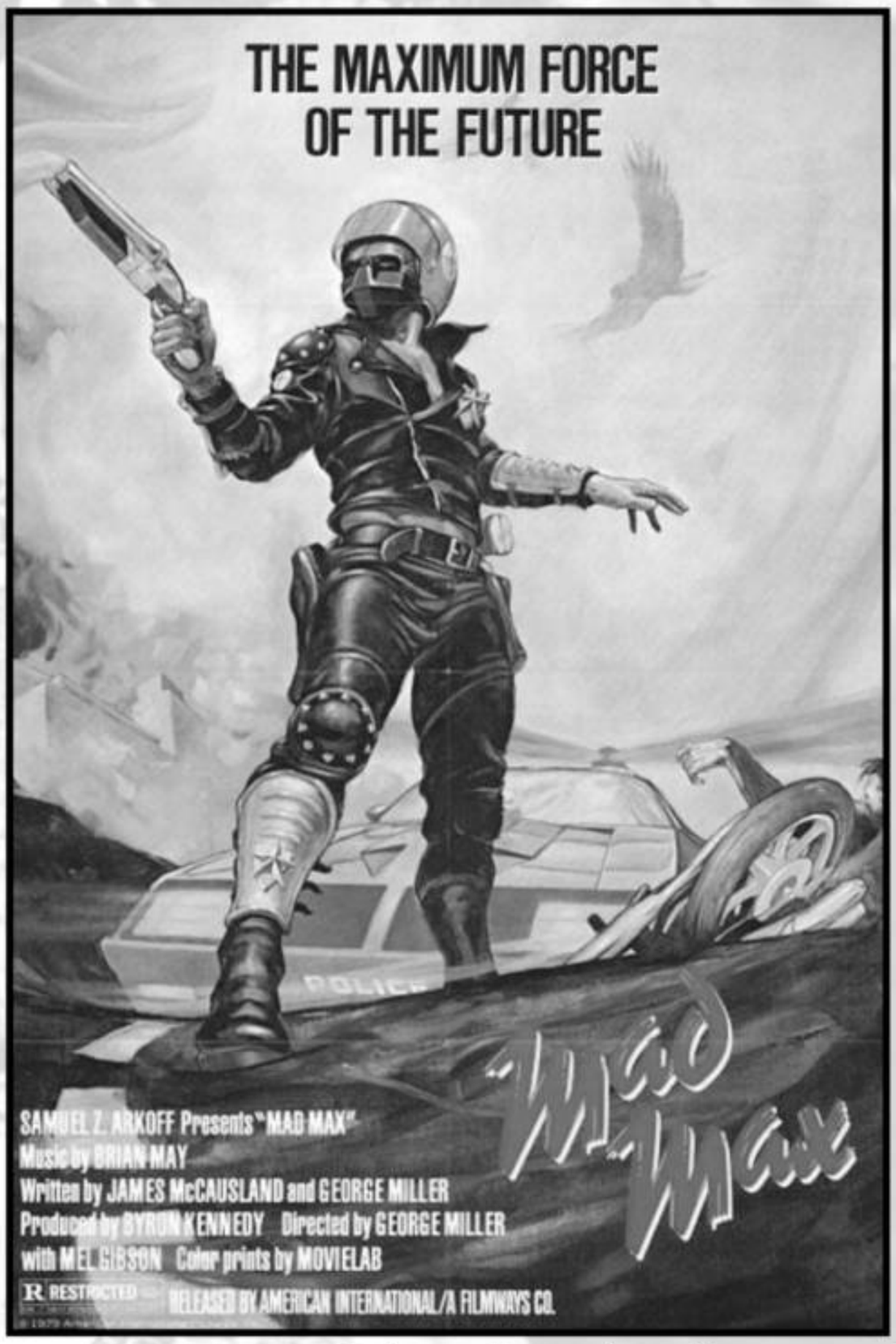




With the events of the oil shortage, it seemed that any film focusing on gas-guzzling cars garnered the attention of moviegoers and hit box-office gold. George Miller's *Mad Max* (1979) combines subculture aesthetic with fast turbo-charged vehicles and a revenge theme. But more so, the film itself is filled with underlying messages that 'the system' is busted. Miller's world is one that borders on anarchy and disorder with the last hope being that of the Main Force Patrol (MFP), a type of highway police referred to by the renegade motorcycle gangs as 'the Bronze'. Led by the vicious Toecutter, the gangs dress in primitive, customized clothing – bearing a strong resemblance to punk counterculture outfits, while the MFP wear leather jackets and more stylish, authoritarian garb.

Though produced in Australia, *Mad Max* has a 1970's American Western frame of mind. The film metaphorically combats what some might call the 'failed liberalism' of Jimmy Carter, urging the viewers to sympathize with the character of Max, a member of the MFP whose methods go beyond standard procedure, at times even taking extreme measures to get the job done. While dangerous and outside protocol, Max earns results. The opening scene where the MFP chases the maniacal Nightrider sets the tone for the rest of the film. Two MFP cruisers and a motorcycle are totaled in the ensuing chase, along with a vast amount of property damage, and the criminal still escapes, causing havoc. The MFP failed because they used 'liberal' tactics to apprehend a lunatic who thrives on lawlessness and mayhem. Max, on the other hand, utilizes more aggressive tactics, and succeeds in eliminating the Nightrider.

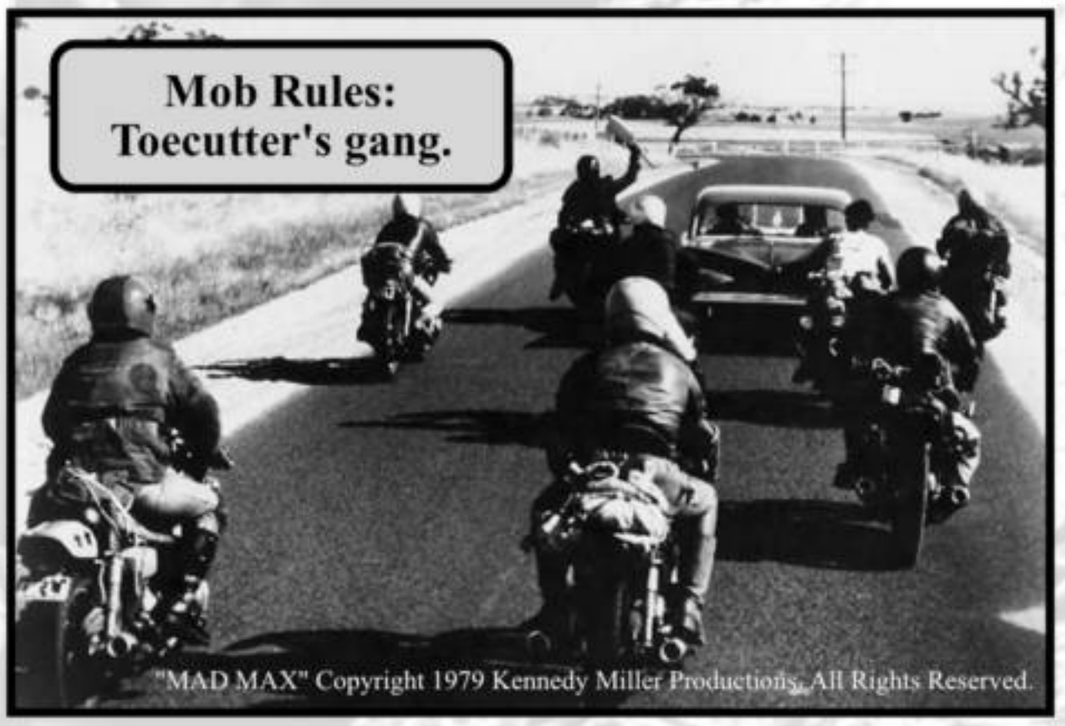
There is no hero in *Mad Max*, only revenge seekers and, at best, anti-heroes. A different, more violent dystopia is displayed in Miller's film, where the apocalypse is an ongoing occurrence and the last chance of freedom is on the road. But even that seems hopeless, as the road is overrun with violent gangs. The only hope is for normal people to become fighters: warriors. To survive on a wasteland of road and asphalt, there needed to be *road warriors*...



Do We Need Another Hero? Before Armageddon to Beyond Thunderdome

The eighties had no defining moments of McCarthyism, a Vietnam War, or the Civil Rights movement. The Cold War was in a constant state of fluctuation, at one side President Reagan considered Russia 'the evil empire', yet by the late eighties both the fall of the Berlin Wall and Communism were imminent. Perhaps, in part due to Reagan's early eighties speeches denouncing the evils of Communism, Hollywood had a revitalized interest in portraying the 'Red hordes'. Unlike *Panic in Year Zero!* where the enemy menace is never given a true face, films of the eighties relished the idea of depicting the villainy of the Soviet Union. *Rocky IV* (1985), *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (1985), and *Top Gun* (1986) each depicted the 'good' American against the inherently 'bad' Russian, in what became a celluloid propaganda apparatus (Palmer 208).

Red Dawn (1984) shines light on a World War III scenario where Russia invades the United States which becomes a horrific post-apocalyptic war zone. Throughout the film, the American youth both outsmart and outmaneuver the Soviets who are almost non-human; in fact, they are nearly mechanical in their bloodlust. Palmer calls the film a rightist militarist fantasy, comparable to the Reaganist policy to not back down from the Soviet threat, but to meet it head on (210). The public's fear of an actual on-shore Soviet invasion probably had not been keeping many people awake at night, but the risk



of a potential World War III was not completely implausible.

In George Miller's *The Road Warrior* (1981), a follow up to *Mad Max*, the world has further progressed into a state of decay. The MFP is nowhere to be seen and Max, a burnt-out shell of his former shelf, now wanders the wasteland of the Australian outback. Like most dystopian films of the eighties, *The Road Warrior* begins in an apocalyptic setting where there can be no hope of returning civilization or society back to a state of order or stability, instead, it becomes a lone battle for survival in the wake of a nuclear holocaust.

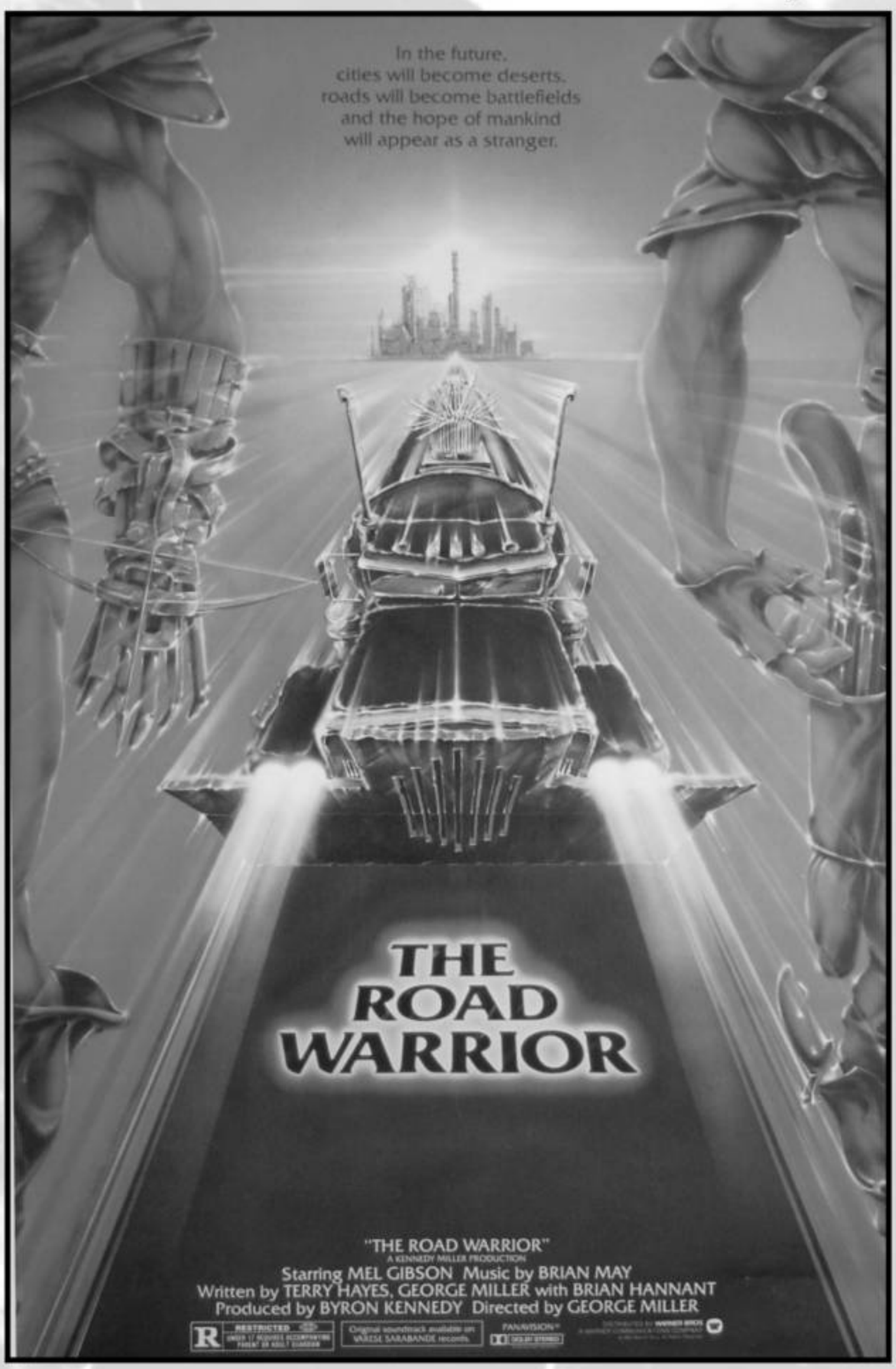
In J. Emmett Winn's article, *Mad Max, Reaganism and The Road Warrior*, he states how Max is not simply an action hero, but a cultural figurehead for the Reagan Administration and a conservative champion for American values (para. 3). In *The Road Warrior*, Max is the classic lone gunfighter, a man set apart from the rest of society. He enters the film, conducts himself based on his own moral code, protects the weak, and leaves by the film's end – alone again. The western narratives are apparent in each film in the Mad Max trilogy, as Mick Broderick describes them in *Heroic Apocalypse: Mad Max, Mythology and the Millennium*, they uphold the 'Western heroic myth' (257). Yet, this is a future western and, in place of the gunfighter's trusty horse is Max's V8 Interceptor.

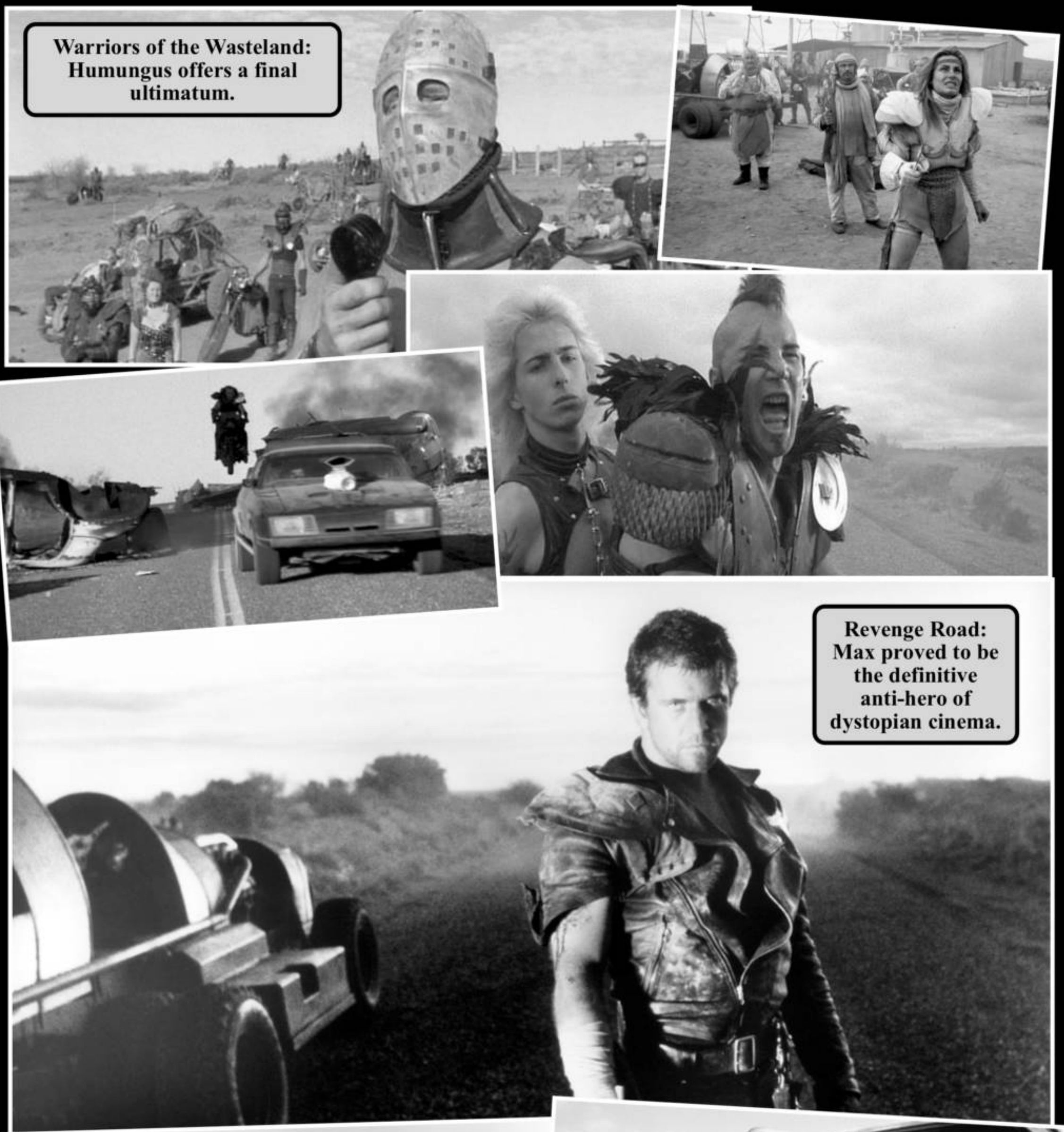
In *The Road Warrior*, Max has moved on from his position as an authority figure, even further distancing himself from the liberal tactics of the MFP. Such prior 'tolerant' methods of removing society's parasites have been proven time and again to be useless in dealing with the scourges of the wasteland. In fact, the old ways of policing have cost Max his wife and child. Like Reagan's administration, tougher policies of dealing with not only the Soviet Union, but the war on drugs, crime, and the criminal underclass were escalated (Winn para. 14). In similar fashion, Max assumes a more vigilant, radical approach to his enemies; unremarkably, *The Road Warrior* depicted acts of violence and bloodshed to a greater degree than either its precursor or successor.

The villains of *The Road Warrior* bear a striking relation to the threats that America faced both at home and on the international front. The gangs that aim to disrupt society are led by Humungus, a hockey mask-wearing Goliath. His sole intention is to horde the gasoline from a rag-tag group of settlers that have reconstructed an oil refinery. Humungus' gang becomes a not-so-subtle representation of the Middle East and their influence over the most precious natural resource under the sun. Palmer claims that, "This oil siege that drives the plot of *The Road Warrior* mirrors the eighties Middle East volatility until Max arrives to lead this lost tribe to its promised land" (204). It is no accident that Humungus, the zenith of evil and corruption in the wasteland, is referred to as the *Ayatollah of Rock'n'Rolla*, a negative connotation towards Middle Eastern fundamentalists.

Humungus leads, what amounts to, a cluster of angry eighties underground youth members. Winn argues that, "Humungus and his tribe resemble counter-culture members in our contemporary society…their mohawks and punk sadomasochistic clothing and equipment link their origins to 'the gay underworld'…the 'savages' of *The Road Warrior* are fabricated as aberrant, dangerous, and threatening to the status quo and conservative values" (para. 21). The Reagan Administration, in particular, promoted nationalism and, through the eyes of staunch conservatism, alleged "social deviants" were looked down upon.

Like Snake Plissken in John Carpenter's





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dystopian science fiction tale, *Escape From New York* (1981), Max is an anti-hero. He seeks not to change the world but, through his unrelenting Reagan-esque cowboy methods, just barely manages to save the day. Throughout eighties apocalypse cinema, the role of the hero was always in question. In *Mad Max*, Fifi, the MFP captain, has a debate with Max:

Fifi: "They say people don't believe in heroes anymore. Well damn them! You and me, Max, we're gonna give them back their heroes!"

Max: "Ah, Fif…do you really expect me to go for that crap?"

Fifi: "You gotta admit, I sounded good there for a minute, huh?"

Despite the future's need for a hero, there never steps forward a 'true' hero. Max never changes the world. This correlates to Reagan himself, a figurehead for a cold war where no punches were thrown. Soviet Communism collapsed during the Reagan presidency, but many political analysts still argue if such an outcome would have been inevitable anyway. As Reagan stated in a 1982 speech, the Soviet empire was already on track to crumble as their system was "faltering because rigid centralized control has destroyed incentives for innovation, efficiency, and individual achievement."

In *Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome* (1985), those that live in the refuge of Bartertown no longer want a hero. The theme song to the film, "We Don't Need Another Hero", is synonymous with the thoughts of the primitive town's occupants. In essence, they are speaking of the paper hero who comes bearing false promises, someone who never truly succeeds in changing the world.

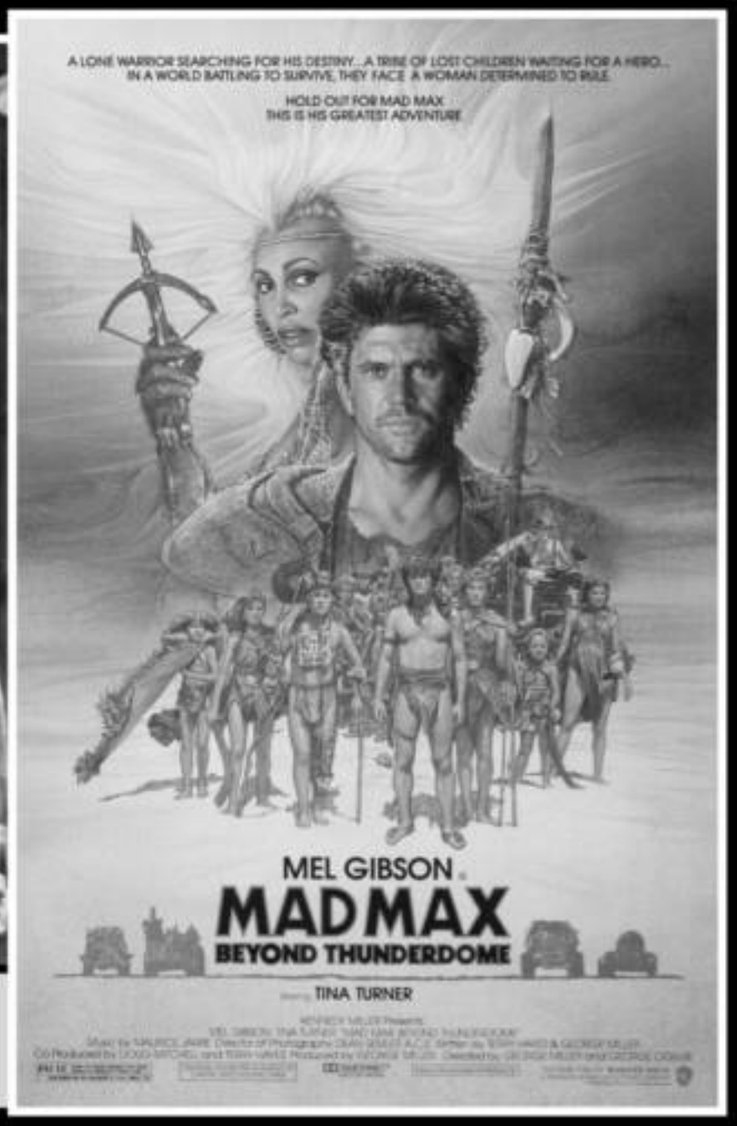
In a rare example of an apocalypse being beneficial, the ruler of Bartertown, Aunty Entity, tells Max of her past before the apocalypse:

Aunty: "Do you know who I was? Nobody. Except on the day 'after', I was still alive. This nobody had a chance to be somebody."

Unlike the youthful gangs of the previous Mad Max films, the younger generation in *Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome* is a tribe of lost children, a symbolic hope for mankind. Unlike Humungus' gang, this tribe has not been tainted by the counter-culture influence and, instead of rebelling against whatever shattered husk of society still exists, they await for an adult to guide them towards a new future.

Max finds himself as an unwilling savior figure to a tribe of lost children.

Who Run Bartertown? Master Blaster.



"MAD MAX: BEYOND THUNDERDOME" Copyright 1985 Kennedy Miller Prod./Warner Bros. All Rights Reserved.

No Need for Heroes: Aunty Entity hunts down Max.

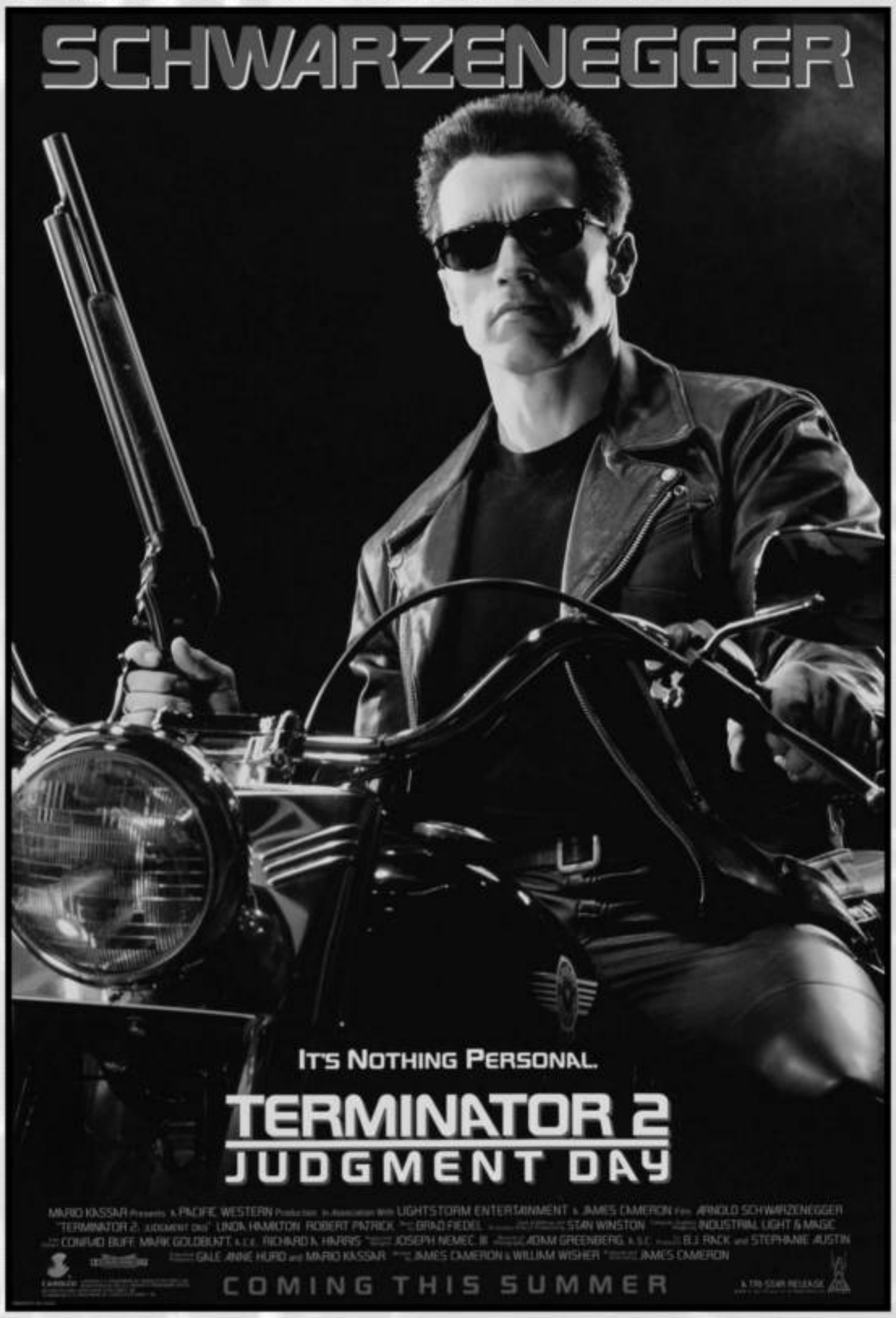
He'll be Back. The Countdown to Judgment Day

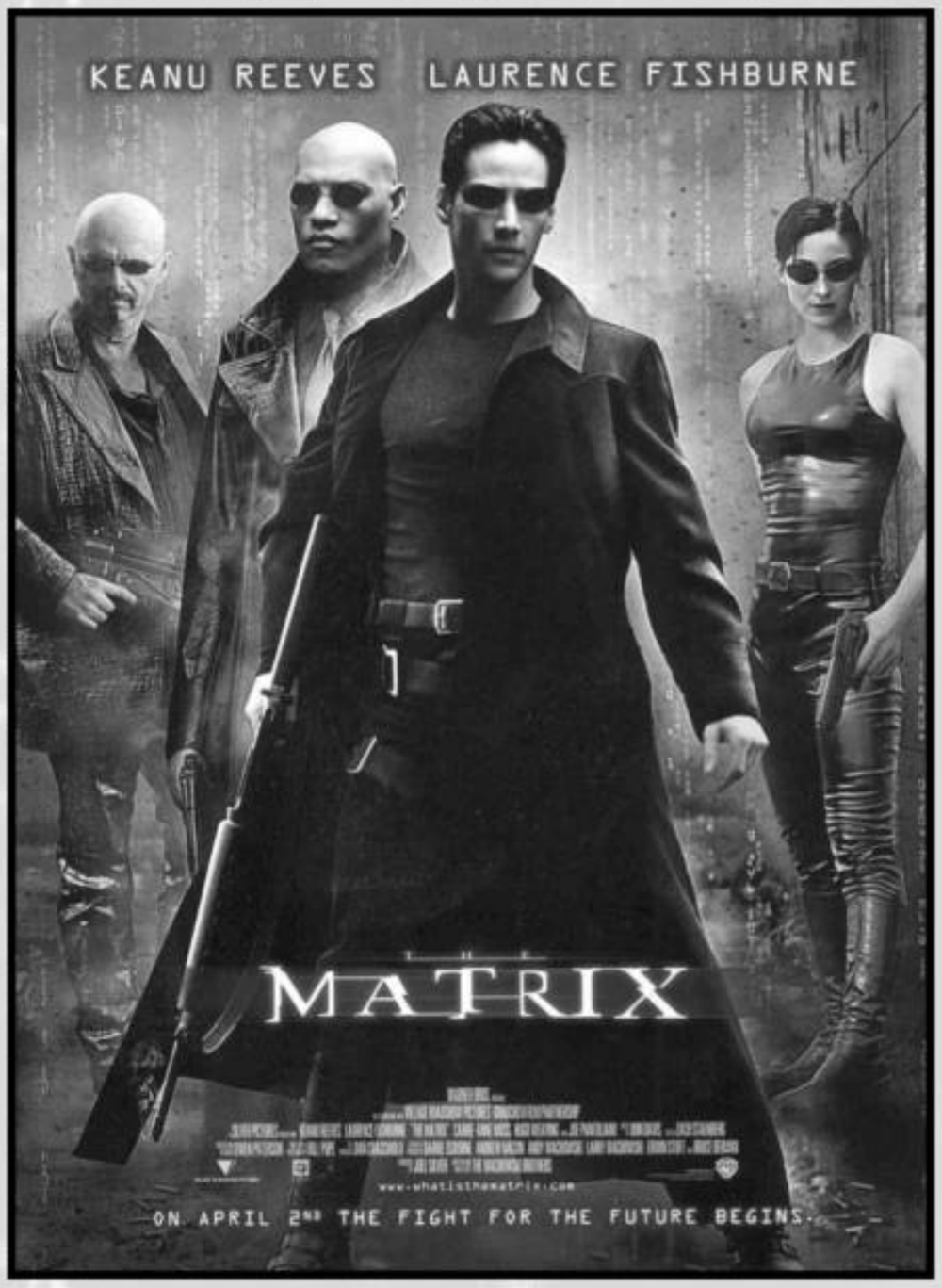
With the early nineties the fall of Communism was complete, making America the last superpower – and with it came the search for Hollywood's next great threat, a threat that can now be anywhere and everywhere. Narco-terrorists, neo-Nazis, and homegrown syndicates were the order of the day. A new wave of self-awareness occurred throughout the nineties as well, an alertness of both the political and cultural landscapes – whether it was mocking film genres, like in Wes Craven's *Scream* (1996) or becoming involved in more globally-conscious activities.

Ironic that self-awareness not only became a standout point of the nineties, but also pervaded the realms of dystopian cinema, such as machines that gained their *own* 'self-awareness'. No greater example can be found than in *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991). Whereas many of the past dystopic films presented a bleak future, James Cameron's film offered a light at the end of the tunnel. In fact, the very enemy from 1984's *The Terminator* was converted from an unstoppable assassin to a heroic protector of the film's protagonist, John Connor. Newman views the film as an alteration and change of attitude to the standard apocalypse formula, "The implacable killing machine is humanized into a father figure…Linda Hamilton's dream of a world-engulfing holocaust is cancelled out by a vision of happy children as the course of history is altered" (246). The nineties offered an optimistic outlook to America's future, and cinema mirrored the public sentiment closely.

The nineties also became the first decade where computers were brought into the average person's home and the internet swept the masses like a tidal wave. These new outlets of technology also found a basis in *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, as the older T-800 model must do battle with the more deadlier and advanced liquid metal T-1000. This war of technology was synonymous with the average American's decision – and subsequent choices – of purchasing new hardware for their home. These options had been previously unavailable a decade ago to your everyday consumer. One of the overall messages in *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* is a warning to humanity about technological progression moving too fast and the inherent danger of such advancements. This is particularly evident concerning the issue of sentience among machines, which eventually leads to Skynet becoming self-aware and the machines declaring war on mankind.

Man against machine was a theme that continued into the late nineties, culminating with the pre-millennium blockbuster, *The Matrix* (1999). In the film, people are living in a false reality, created by a computer mainframe known as 'the matrix' which sends 'agents' out to dispose of anyone who combats its sophisticated program. The entire film plays out as a dark allegory that coincides with humanity's fascination of the virtual internet world, where people can lose themselves in chat rooms, instant messaging, video games, or the myriad life





consuming avenues that it offers. In Peter Fitting's essay, *Unmasking the Real? Critique and Utopia in Recent SF Films*, he poses the question, "How far off the mark is *The Matrix* in its depiction of today's world? How is the virtual reality of our present as offered by the machines different from the imaginary satisfactions of the illusory false utopias offered us by the media" (161)? Equally, French theorist Jean Baudrillard suggests that the human mind is stimulated by false-realities and 'hyperreal' environments, using Disneyland as a modern example where an illusionary world is created and sustained solely by the patron's imagination (12).

Despite the evils of computer machinations, *The Matrix's* overall tone follows a similar formula to *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*. Both are inherently bleak, yet both offer hope and a savior figure before the credits roll. Cameron's film is uplifting in the moments shared by John Connor and the T-800 – proving that there exists some middle ground between man and machine, while Neo rises up against the machines to become 'the one' in *The Matrix*, to which he begins the process of 'awakening' the world.

Who Watches The Watchmen? Superpowers, Doomsday Clocks, and the Apocalypse

The United States no longer needed the Nazis, Japanese, or Russians. It found its new enemy on September 11th, 2001 in the form of global terrorism. The millennium brought along its share of changes, among which were the way Americans viewed the world. After 9/11 both political and social outlooks were vastly altered. A reemergence of old fears of nuclear devastation resurfaced, bringing the apocalyptic anxieties of the fifties full-circle.

V for Vendetta (2005) incorporated aspects of a totalitarian government that rules its people with an iron hand. Controversial in many respects, the film asks audiences to analyze the difference between a 'freedom fighter' and a 'terrorist', if there is such a difference, as the answer is subjective to who is being terrorized and to who seeks freedom. In the United States, aspects of the Patriot Act, domestic wire tapping and rampant torture in foreign prison camps resembled many facets of *V for Vendetta*.

With the Iraq War and falsified information concerning weapons of mass destruction, the anti-government sentiment of the seventies returned, along with the accompanying anti-war protests. The distrust in a powerful government is found throughout *V for Vendetta*, while a film like *Children of Men* (2006) illustrates a total lack of government control and utter anarchy.

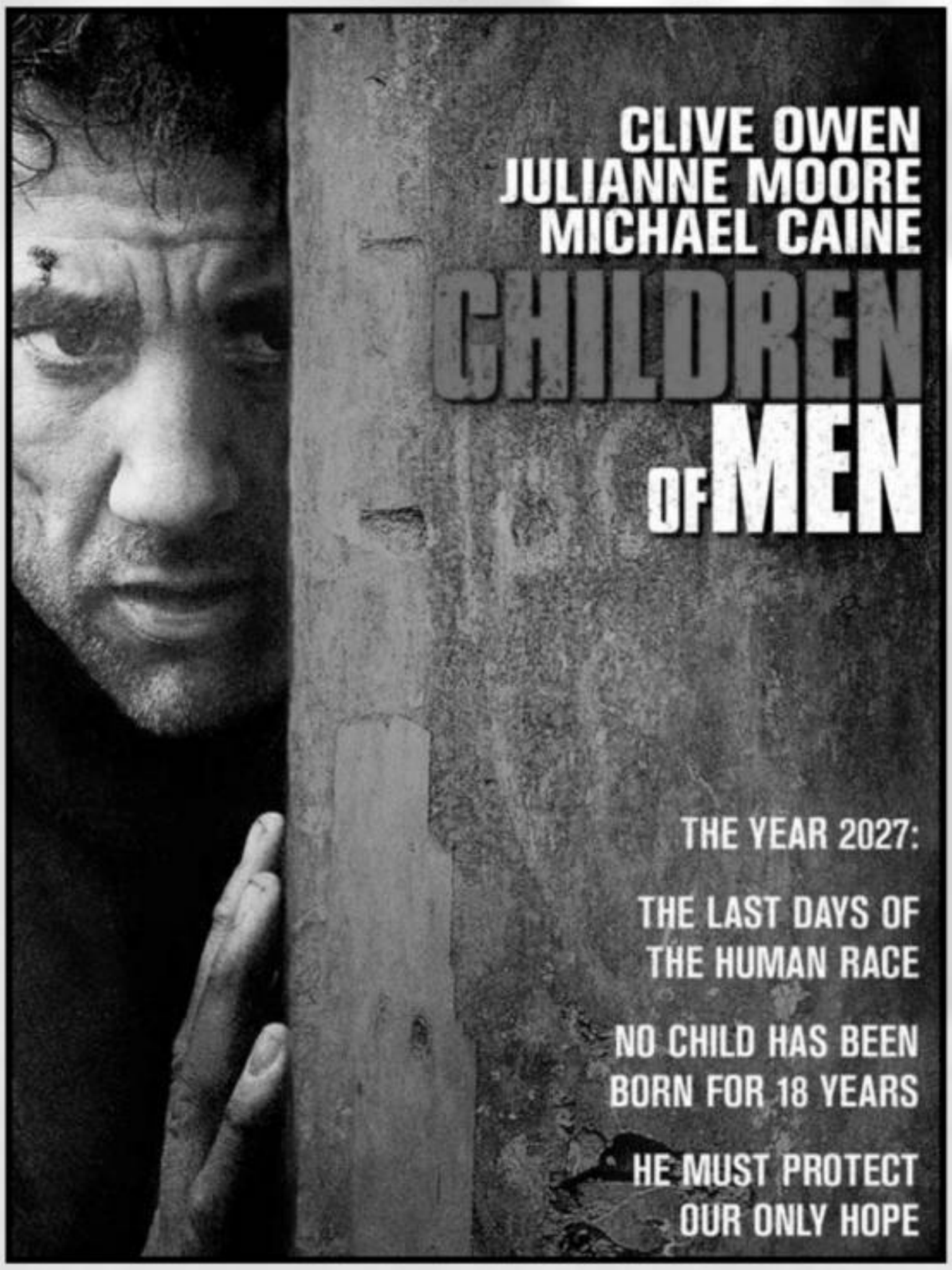
The public in *V for Vendetta* is shown to be fearful of their government, to the point where the media

is censored, books are banned, and curfews are enforced. The punishment for violating any of these laws yields disastrous results. Citizens live in such apprehension of the government that V, the film's central character, states, "People should not be afraid of their governments. Governments should be afraid of their people." *Children of Men* presents a militaristic government that cares very little for its citizens; in fact, the military-police have turned portions of the country into a war-zone, a visual example of which can be found at the film's climax during an apartment building siege.

Alan Moore's graphic novel *Watchmen* was published in 1986; it took over twenty years to bring a live-action adaptation to the silver screen. Zack Snyder's *Watchmen* (2009) takes place in the mid-eighties, true to its literary counterpart, however the imagery and themes contain a very post-9/11 feel. The film's ending presents a devastating dystopia, yet it is created with the intention of one day creating a utopia.

In the nineties the 'hero' theme had returned, the T-800 and Neo were heroes who fought against overwhelming odds, with the sole intention of preserving life and doing what was right. With the turn of the new millennium, heroes vanished from dystopian cinema, paving the way for the resurrection of the anti-hero. V in *V for Vendetta* is driven by revenge, although his actions are for the greater good, his motivation is purely personal. Theo in *Children of Men*, while far from heroic, is propelled forward over the course of the film by being continuously thrust into event after event. In *Watchmen*, Rorschach is a psychotic vigilante with a twisted view of a twisted world, declaring that he's seen the world's true face, one filled with sex and murder, and that when they whisper 'save us', he'll say no.

Unlike the common anti-hero aesthetic, each of the aforementioned characters rise to messianic status after they sacrifice themselves for



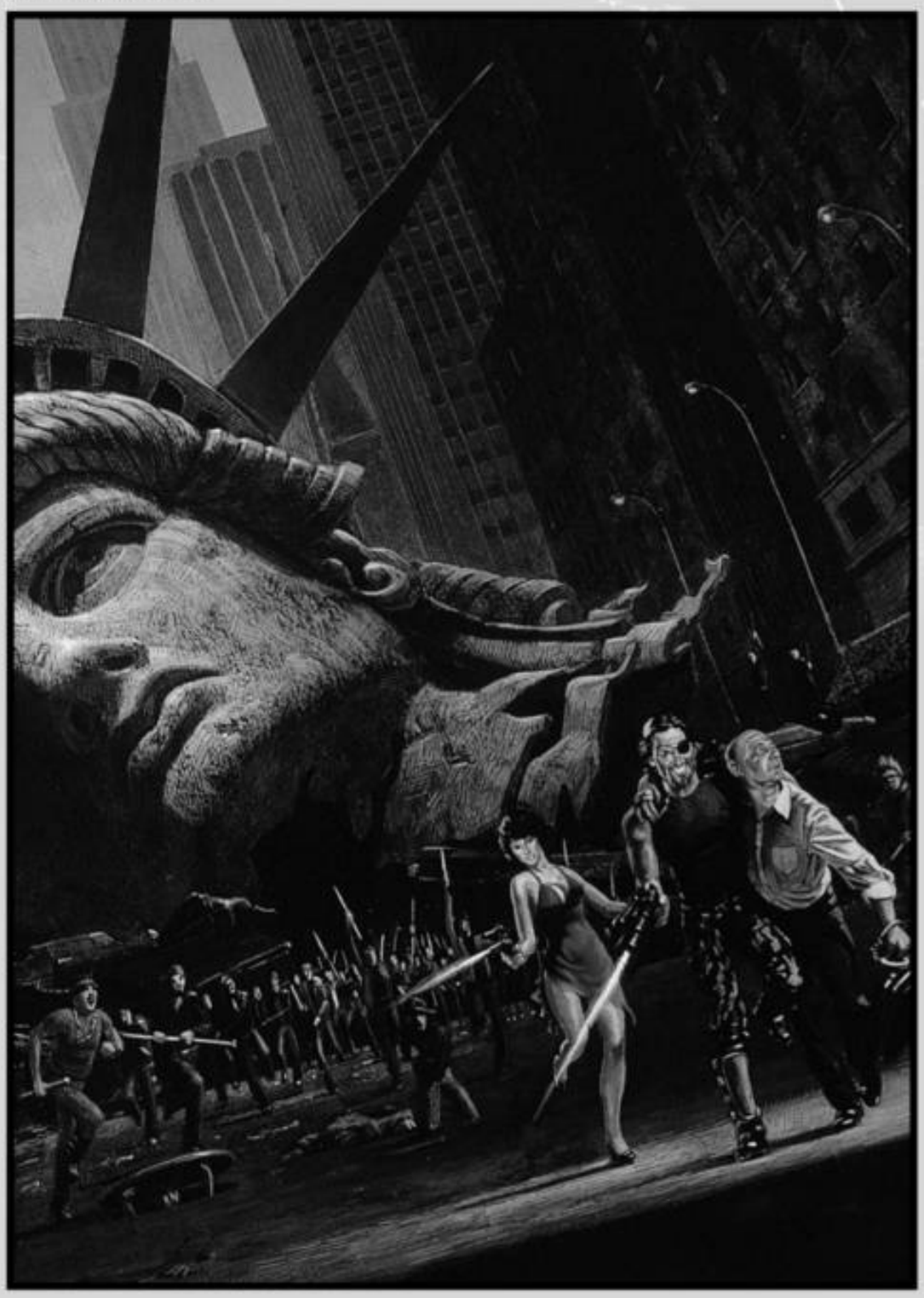
the good of society. This recurring theme of self-sacrifice emanates through many post-9/11 dystopian films. The media surrounding September 11th described fallen firefighters and police as heroes who had sacrificed their own lives for the sake of others. While firefighters and police perform heroic deeds every day, this idea that heroism is granted upon a sacrificial rite has often permeated through mainstream cinema.

V becomes a martyr after his death, while Theo dies in order to save humanity's last child. Rorschach, despite his insanity, is the only character who never compromises his ideals and is sacrificed because of it.

Where will dystopian cinema lead to in the next decade? While hard to say, it is certain that it will reflect the fears, tensions, and anxieties of the period. Will the next wave of apocalyptic films portray destruction at the hands of sentient machines, or once again due to giant radioactive behemoths? Possibly an ecological disaster of some kind? Biological warfare? An alien invasion? Or some new fear yet to be uncovered? Only time will tell.

Through and through, it's startlingly clear: humanity has a morbid fascination with death. We fear it, yet we can not get enough of it. We are obsessed with our own destruction. Is it because we feel that annihilation is the only inevitable outcome? With thousands of nuclear weapons on the planet, is it only a matter of time before they are used, either in a full-scale conflict or after they are acquired by radical extremists?

One point remains certain, as long as the world exists, cinema will cascade our fears on the silver screen for all to see.



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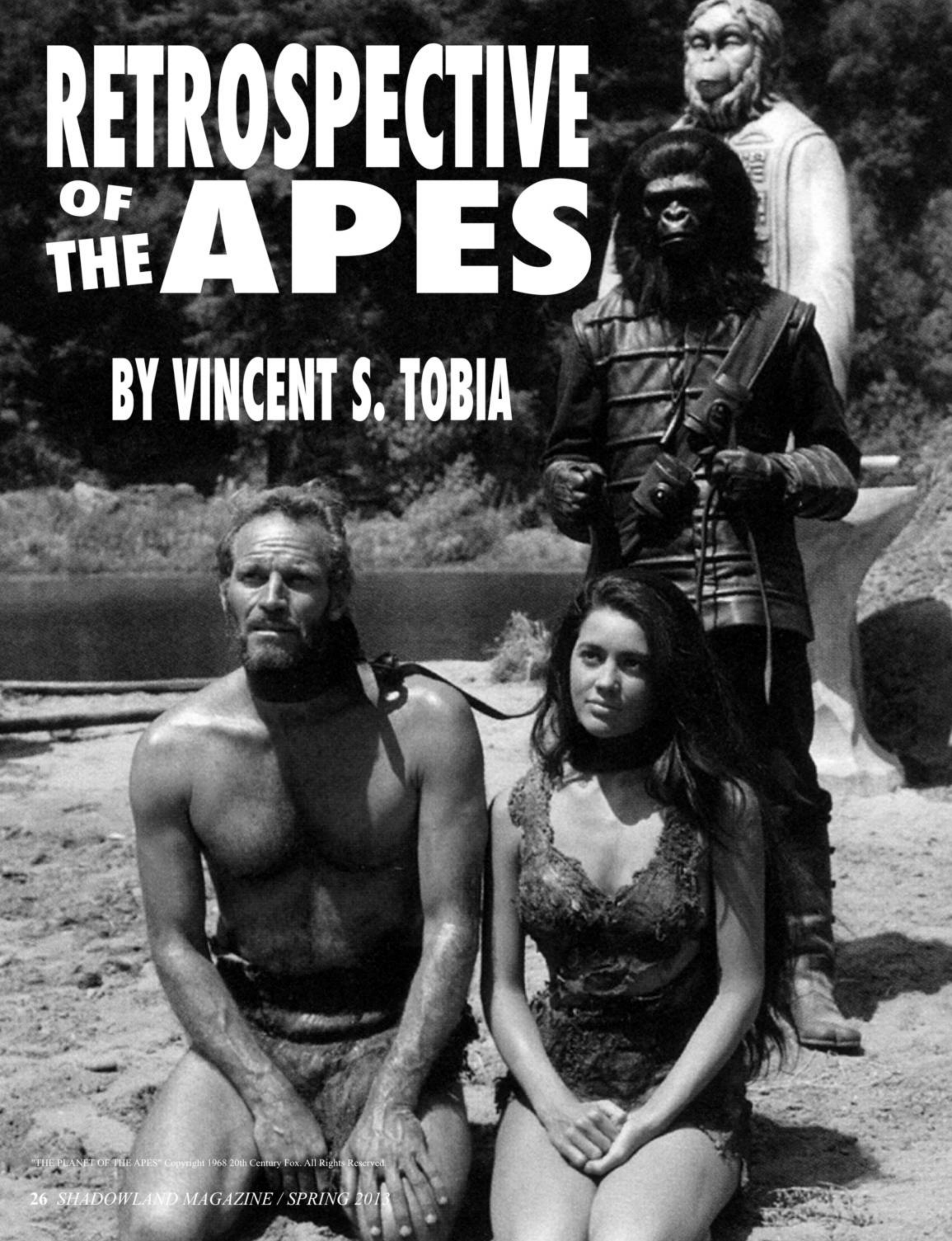
RETROSPECTIVE OF THE APES

BY VINCENT S. TOBIA



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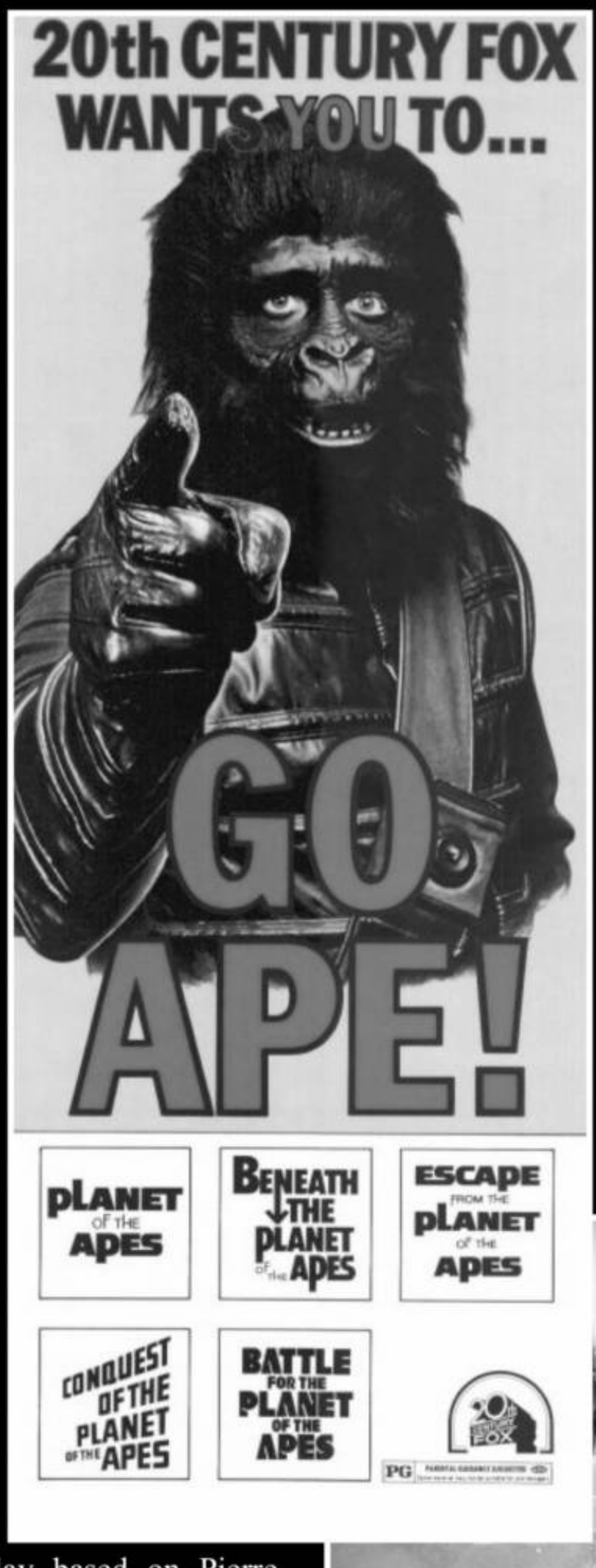
Thank goodness for that snow storm.

A school night, caught in the middle of a harsh February winter. My brothers and I were glued to the television; what were we watching? *Planet of the Apes*? Nope. We were obsessing over the weather forecast. The nor'easter that was planning to drop a foot of snow on Pennsylvania, did just that. We knew on that Wednesday evening that we'd have a four day weekend.

Our local video store was not but a block away. I wanted to rent something lengthy, to hold me over on the long weekend. I first noticed a VHS copy of *Planet of the Apes* on the rack, but then I realized that there were four more movies in the epic saga. And they were all sitting on the rental rack next the original classic sci-fi flick. I rented every one of them that snowy Thursday and I was thrown into the much larger Apes universe.

So here I am, present day, re-watching the five films in order: *Planet of the Apes*, *Beneath the Planet of the Apes*, *Escape from the Planet of the Apes*, *Conquest of the Planet of the Apes* and *Battle for the Planet of the Apes*.

I will be referencing specific scenes and dialog so: **Spoiler Alert!**



Planet of the Apes (1968)

It's A Madhouse!

Rod Serling and Michael Wilson wrote a brilliant screenplay based on Pierre Boulle's science fiction novel titled *Planet of the Apes*. One of the first things I recognized when re-watching this movie was the abundance of outstanding dialog. I mean really, this is an incredibly well written film. And whom better to write sci-fi gold than *Twilight Zone* writer/creator/host Rod Serling? In a film that relied heavily on actors wearing ape makeup, strong dialog and engaging conversations made the story that more believable. The mythology in this story is so well done and the acting is top notch.

Charlton Heston: iconic, wildly emoting, bad-ass! And after this film he starred in a few of my other favorite films, *The Omega Man* (1971) and *Soylent Green* (1973), both of which are classics. But I'll always remember him as Colonel George Taylor. He is practically the only human survivor in a planet completely run by intelligent apes. As the viewer, you can not help but feel like you are on this journey with him, side by side.

The film begins with Colonel Taylor sitting at the controls of a spaceship, here he begins with a beautiful monologue explaining his plight. Taylor is accompanied by three other scientists, all of whom are in a medicine induced deep sleep. Before Taylor falls into a deep sleep himself, he speaks one of my favorite lines in the film:

"*Does man that marvel at the universe, that glorious paradox, who sent me to the stars still wage war against his brother? Keep his neighbor's children starving*?"

The ship lands itself in a large lake on an unknown planet. One of the scientists, a female named Stewart, has died during her deep sleep due to an air leak in her stasis bed. Taylor notices the time clock on the space ship now indicates that they've been away from Earth for almost two-thousand years. But they have to hurry to escape before the spaceship totally capsizes into the lake.

Taylor and the two other scientists walk this barren planet looking for a more habitable area. The scenery here is great, the scientists travel over vast caverns

and rocky terrain. There is a moment here where lightning strikes across a clear blue sky and then large rocks fall down a hill, chasing our protagonists away. I believe this was done to foreshadow the sequel, even though it is such a minor detail in the scope of this film. I'll be sure to bring this up again later.

Taylor and company finally come across plant life and they start following a path of greenery that leads them to a freshwater pond. Excited to find the pond, they disrobe immediately and go for a refreshing swim. This is definitely a crucial mistake in that their advanced spacesuits are stolen, reducing them to wearing rags for clothing. Shortly thereafter we are introduced to the native humans of this planet. They are much less evolved; they act very much like prehistoric man. But Taylor doesn't have long to question himself about these wild roaming humans. A hunting party of apes on horseback surprise them, killing some humans and capturing others. Taylor is captured as well, but not before he takes a bullet to the throat, rendering him speechless, exactly like the primitive humans of which he is now considered.

Taylor is taken into captivity and it is very entertaining to see him trying to communicate without speech to the chimp doctors. Our lead apes in this film are Cornelius (played by Roddy McDowall), Zira (played by Kim Hunter), and the infamous Dr. Zaius (played by Maurice Evans). Cornelius and Zira are scientists and also husband and wife. Zira almost immediately notices that Taylor is not like the other humans on this planet. She gives him the nickname "Bright-Eyes". I always enjoyed the hierarchy of the apes in this world. Chimpanzees are scientists, the orangutans are mainly elder law-providers and represent their justice system, and the gorillas make up the brute force and massive army. You can tell from one of the earliest scenes that Dr. Zaius seems to know the truth behind everything and he knows exactly how intelligent of a creature Taylor really is.

One of this movie's landmark scenes is when Taylor is running wild through the entire ape village and is then captured in a net. While hanging, in front of a massive crowd of apes, Taylor finally regains the ability to speak and says one of the famous lines in cinema history:

"*Take your stinking paws of me, you damn dirty ape!*"

After a tribunal led by Dr. Zaius, every point of interest in Taylor's favor is overturned. Even with the power of speech and logic, Dr. Zaius will not tend to conceive Taylor as anything more than a wild beast with a gift. Taylor insists that the inevitable truth of his story would be found where his spaceship landed: The Forbidden Zone. It is here that Cornelius lets it be known that he has visited the Forbidden Zone on an archeological quest and had found evidence of a simian culture that existed long before the "scared scrolls" of their ape civilization were written. And after fighting the tribunal in Taylor's favor, Cornelius and Zira are charged with malicious mischief and scientific heresy.

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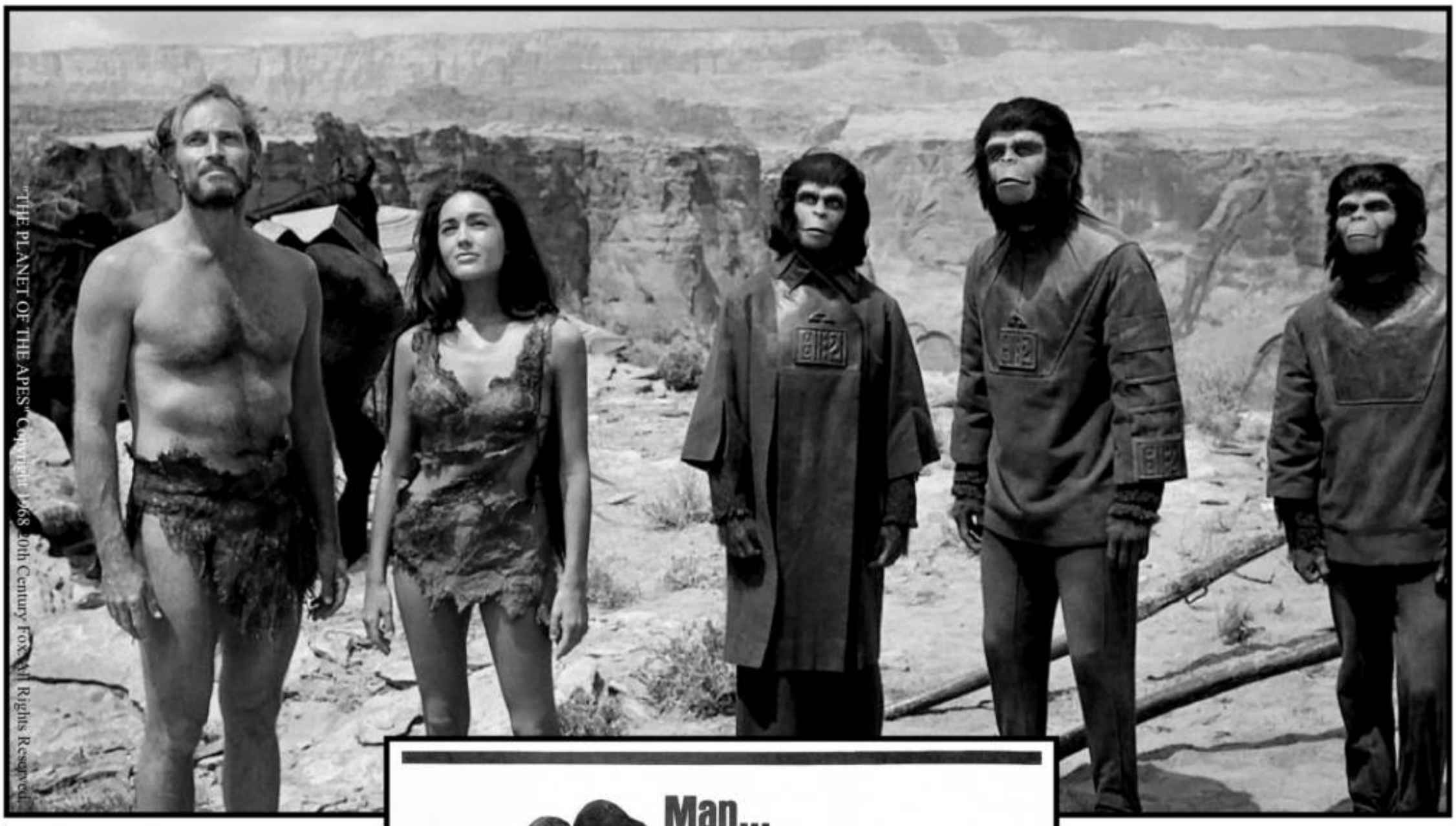
The final act of this film begins with Taylor being sprung from his cage, due to the efforts of Zira. They head for the Forbidden Zone along with Cornelius to seek the answers that prove their beliefs. Taylor demands that they bring along one of the primitive humans, a woman he named Nova, for Taylor has developed a bond with her throughout the course of the film. They cross the desert area and return to a shoreline where Cornelius's previous archeological expedition is still intact, located inside of a vast cave. It doesn't take long for Dr. Zaius and his army of gorillas to arrive, but Taylor handles the situation well and makes a bargain with the great doctor. If real scientific proof of another culture can be found inside those caves, then Dr. Zaius would free Cornelius and Zira of the heresy charges against them. In the cave Cornelius provides Dr. Zaius with the best evidence of a past civilized culture: a human doll. Of course Dr.



Zaius dismisses the evidence, saying that even human dolls exist in current ape culture. But when Nova starts to play with this doll, it speaks. It mechanically murmurs the phrase "*Mama*." Taylor then exclaims "*Dr. Zaius, would an ape make a human doll that talks?*" Ape culture never knew man to speak, hence the talking doll finally proves the point.

After reassuring the doll's significance (proving Cornelius and Zira's innocence), Taylor demands food, ammunition, and a horse. He then takes Nova with him into the Forbidden Zone. Cornelius and Zira, although confused, bid him farewell and good luck. In a marvelous moment Taylor and Zira kiss each other goodbye; Zira comments on how damned ugly Taylor is. Before Taylor rides off to explore the Forbidden Zone, Dr. Zaius warns him about finding an answer to everything, "*Don't look for it, Taylor. You may not like what you find.*"

And boy was he right. Taylor rides along with Nova, finding the truth along the beach. The Statue of Liberty, in ruins, waste deep, jutting up from the shoreline. This world was not an alien planet located some millions of light years away, but the very same planet Taylor had came from. Our Earth.

I'm still met with a powerful respect for the end of this film. It is important to note the brilliant and unconventional music score by Jerry Goldsmith. A

classic from start to finish, directed with fantastic shots by Franklin J. Schaffner, this movie stands out as one of the greatest films of all time – in *any* genre.

Beneath the Planet of the Apes (1970)

The Only Good Human, is a Dead Human!

The second movie in the classic Apes franchise starts out exactly where the first one ended. Direct sequels usually do not work, something always seems missing or feels wrong. But this film introduces a few subplots to keep the story interesting and fresh.

Heston's character is back, but he only appears in the very beginning and the very end of the film. But never fear, there is a new astronaut who looks almost exactly like Taylor. Brent is the soul survivor of another space mission that was meant to ultimately find the lost Taylor. Brent is like a younger, smaller version of our famous hero. Nova appears on horseback, alone, and Brent notices that she is wearing Taylor's military dog-tags and questions her about his whereabouts. A brief flashback shows that Taylor went too deep into the Forbidden Zone and vanished.

I must admit I did not like the idea of the Forbidden Zone when I first watched this movie many years ago. The random fire in the sky, awkward lightning strikes, and sudden earthquakes; I just thought it was getting too much away from the Ape vs. Human saga. But looking back, I do really enjoy the Forbidden Zone arc of this film.

Nova takes Brent back to ape city. This is where we get our first glimpse of gorilla General Ursus, who is featured ever so brilliantly on this magazine cover! Ursus intends to lead a massive army of gorillas into the Forbidden Zone. He is convinced that war on the Forbidden Zone and whoever resides there is a necessity for survival.

Cornelius and Zira are in this film for a little as well. Nova leads Brent to the ape couple, seeking maps of the Forbidden Zone in hopes of finding Taylor. Kim Hunter returns to reprise her role as Zira, but Roddy McDowall does not return to play her husband Cornelius. This is the only movie in the classic five in which Roddy McDowall does not appear.

So, in traditional fashion, Nova and Brent get captured by the gorilla soldiers. They are to be used as target practice, until they escape off a caged-carriage and flee from the pursuing gorillas. Brent then leads Nova into an unsuspecting cave. But much to Brent's dismay the cave leads him to what used to be Queensboro Plaza; a now ancient New York City subway station. Brent has a similar emotional melt down to the one that Taylor went through at the end of the first film. I must say that I do respect James Franciscus (Brent) in this role. It is hard not to see him as a "Heston-Knock-Off" but he does play his role with great conviction and acting prowess. While watching Nova sleep, Brent speaks a great line:

"*Are you what we were before we learned to talk and made a mess of everything? Did any good ever come from all that talk around all those tables?*"

As Nova and Brent walk the tunnels underground they come across the New York Public Library, Stock Exchange, and Radio City Music Hall – all seen in ruins. Brent and Nova are walking right into the home of the mutant humans who inhabit the ground beneath the Forbidden Zone. These mutants, assuming their powers come from years of atomic fallout, have gained a telekinetic mind control. These telekinetic powers are responsible for the strange happenings in the

Forbidden Zone. The only real power that the mutant humans have is that of an old atomic missile; which they pray to as their god.

In the finale of this film, the gorilla army finally makes its way to the Forbidden Zone. When they encounter a wall of fire and a large bleeding statue of their Lawgiver, it is Dr. Zaius who sees through the tricks of the mutants and proves to General Ursus's army that it is all just a hoax. Ursus then leads the angry mob of gorillas into the mutants' subterranean city.

Brent is brought back to a prison cell and is finally united with Taylor. It is the mutants' agenda to have them fight to the death via mind control persuasion. It is absolutely great to see Taylor and Brent fighting with each other. I believe this is where this movie really joins itself with the original. Nova enters the room where Taylor and Brent are fighting. Upon seeing Taylor, she is overcome with emotions, and she finally speaks his name, yelling, *"Taylor!"* Her cry distracts the mutant's mind power. Then Brent and Taylor team up

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to make quick work of their mutant captor.

Dr. Zaius and General Ursus lead the army into the atomic missile room. The gorillas begin to tear down the missile as Taylor and Brent are intent on keeping them away from the damned bomb. General Ursus takes aim and fires at Taylor, shooting him directly above the heart. Taylor falls down near the controls of the atomic bomb, fully aware of what he must do. In his dying breath, Taylor leans forward and pulls down the detonation control for the bomb. A close up of his hand is seen pulling the lever down. Taylor's bloody human hand is unmistakably mimicking an ape's paw. The screen fades to white as the sound of a large explosion is heard. An ominous voiceover then says: *"In one of the countless billions of galaxies in the universe lies a medium sized star. And one of its satellites, a green and insignificant planet, is now dead."*

I'll admit, I didn't really like this movie too much as a child. I expected a direct sequel to have much

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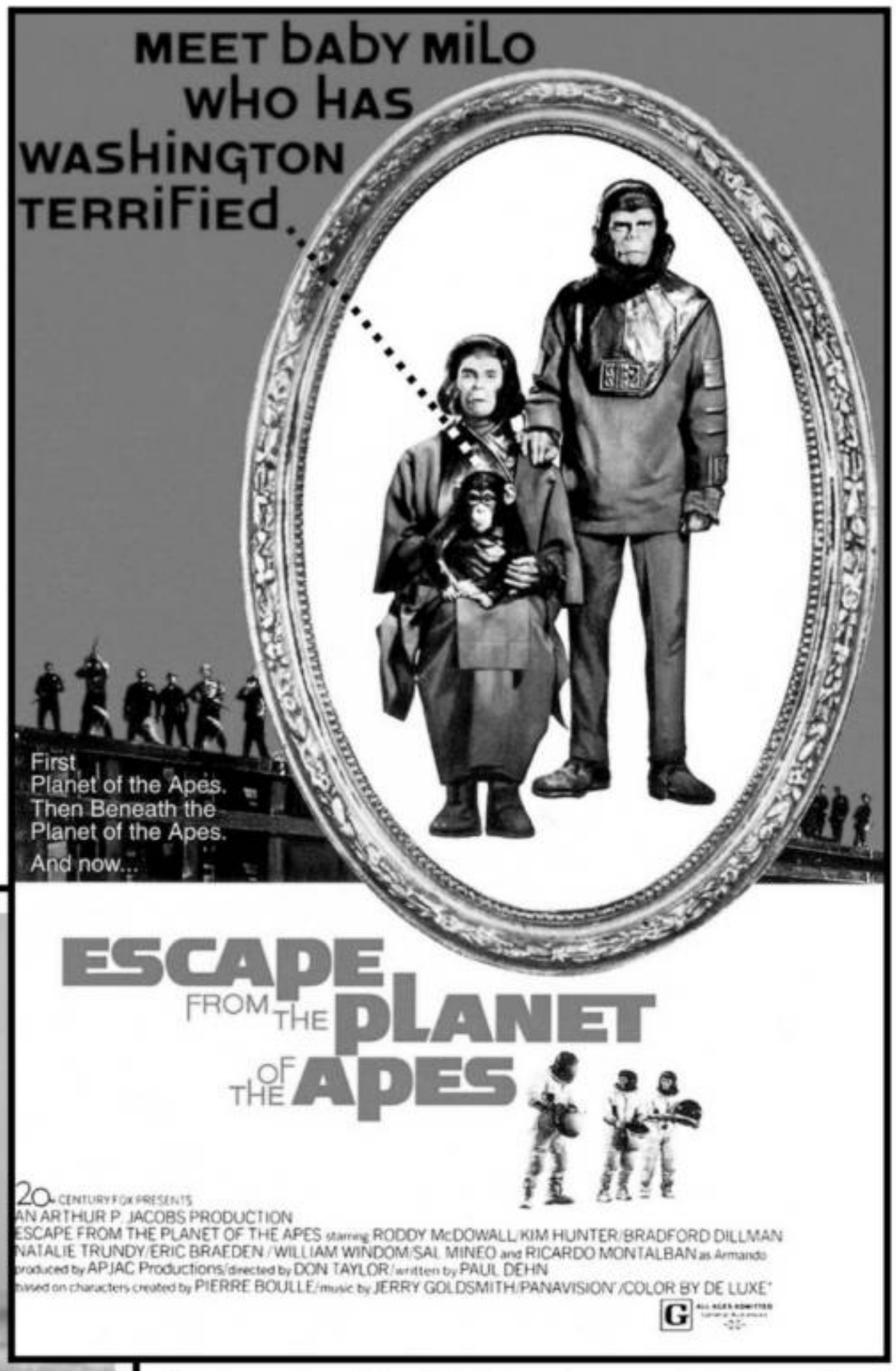
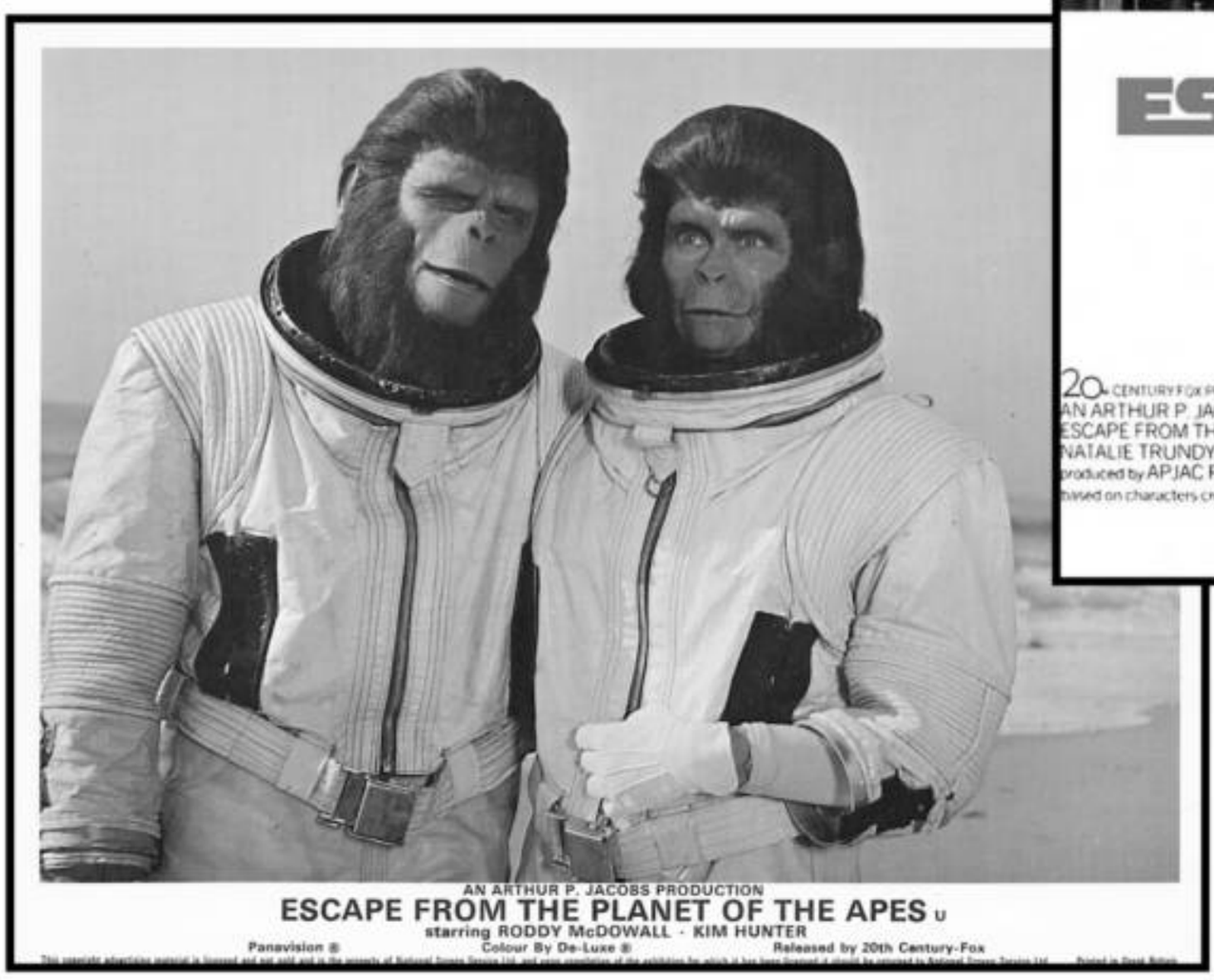
more to do with Taylor. But after watching it again, I find that I really do like this movie a lot. It is a great companion piece to the first one. Watching this film back to back with the original really adds to the gigantic mythos of the Apes. But with Taylor destroying the planet at the end of this movie, where do you go next? Back in time, that's where.

Escape from the Planet of the Apes (1971)

Because I Loathe Bananas!

This is Cornelius and Zira's movie, and a very delightful one at that. The story goes, they fixed up Taylor's spaceship and (along with a chimpanzee scientist named Milo) left the planet of the apes right as it was destroyed. They went backward through the same rip in the time that Taylor originally traveled through and the ship crash lands near a beach in the year 1973. I wonder how come none of these spaceships were ever able to land properly? Now when I first saw this film I was almost immediately turned away. Only a few apes?





Modern-day Earth? What is so *sci-fi* about that? I may have not even finished watching this one the first go around. But this is a great movie, and one that starts a chain reaction for the rest of the series. I like to think of this film as the start of a new trilogy.

Cornelius, Zira, and Milo are taken to the Los Angeles Zoo where they are given

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simple tests and tasks to perform. Zira makes a great example of how intelligent they are, and also shows they possess a form of wit as well. It doesn't take Zira long to reveal that she can speak, sending the country into a frenzy, while the President of the United States call for a commission of inquiry. But before the inquiry Milo is killed during an accident involving a caged gorilla. I'm going to go out on a limb here and say that Milo's death scene might be one of the cheapest death scenes in all of cinema. Just go ahead and watch it for yourself.

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With new friends and fellow animal psychiatrists Dr. Lewis Dixon and Dr. Stephanie Branton at their side, the commission of inquiry goes well enough for Cornelius and Zira. They do explain that they are from Earth's future and where they come from apes talk, and man is dumb. They also hold back information about the Earth's demise through the atomic bomb.

Dr. Hasslein, a senior science advisor on the commission board, is fearful of Cornelius and Zira. He becomes the film's antagonist, seeking the truth about the apes. There is a great scene thirty-two minutes into the film where Dr. Hasslein talks about the theory of "*infinite regression*", explaining just how the apes could have traveled back in time. WATCH THIS SCENE! It will blow your mind!

What follows are a few lengthy sequences where Cornelius and Zira are treated like movie stars. They are shown Los Angeles, riding around in a limousine, and shopping for expensive clothing. Zira is introduced to wine, which she likes very much. She is told it is "*grape-juice plus*". Seemingly carefree, Cornelius and Zira take leave of their troubles. And guess what comes next? Zira becomes pregnant. Another interesting plot twist is revealed when Cornelius explains that sometime in man's future a plague would fall upon all the cats and dogs, humanity's pets would all die off and man would seek out primitive apes for household

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pets. This plot point is very important for the following films.

The finale of this film has Cornelius and Zira on the run, being chased by Dr. Hasslein. Zira's baby is born healthy and given the name Milo. Dr. Hasslein is convinced that little Milo would bring about the future rise of the apes, thus bringing an end to humanity. The film's final scene, on an abandoned tanker ship, is quite shocking. Cornelius is shot dead and falls a great length, landing awkwardly on the ship's deck. Dr. Hasslein corners Zira and her baby, then shoots them both. He repeatedly shoots the baby chimp. In a rather morbid shot, Zira is seen gathering up her dead baby and throws it over the side of the ship, into the waters below.

But Cornelius and Zira are far too smart to have let their child meet such a horrible fate. The final shot of this film shows another baby chimp, sitting safely in a circus cage. The camera zooms in on this chimp baby and he speaks, repeating the word, *"Mama."* Zira and Cornelius had successfully switched their intelligent baby, with that of a primitive one.

I think the most important aspect of this film is that it sets up the next one. Knowing just how little Milo becomes to be safe guarded and allowed to secretly live in the circus, under Armando's watchful eye, is very important to the next movie's success.

Conquest of the Planet of the Apes (1972)

By Tomorrow It Will Be Too Late!

Behold! My favorite film of franchise!

It is now 1991, the plague that would kill all dogs and cats has happened. But apes are not just the new pets for humanity; they are being forcefully trained in massive groups to perform dozens of tasks for humans. Washing dishes, shining shoes, shopping, waiting on tables, mopping floors, just about every mundane chore you can think of. Baby Milo has grown up, now 20 years old, and is brought to the city by his caretaker Armando (played the great Ricardo Montalban).

Armando has changed Milo's name to Caesar, in fear that the name Milo may connect him too closely to his true past. They plan on promoting Armando's circus to the city people, but of course things go awry. Roddy McDowall returns to now play the talking ape Caesar. And this, I believe, is his best performance of the series.

Visually, this film immediately stands out from the others; I love how everything in the movie is slightly futuristic and overwhelmingly cold. There are hardly any bright colors; almost all the humans wear dark clothing and all of the apes wear dark shades of green (chimpanzees), red (gorillas) or yellow (orangutans). All of the sets and scenery are grey corporate buildings and plazas.

Caesar makes the mistake of speaking out against ape brutality and is forced to split up with Armando, who takes the blame for Caesar's outburst. Caesar then assimilates himself into the group of non-speaking apes and he is taken into Ape Management. Here the apes are painfully taught obedience through beatings and electric shock treatments. But it doesn't take long for Caesar to start making friends among the non-talking apes. And he also excels at the tasks he is given by his human captors.

Armando, who has been under interrogation by the Governor's men, is starting to crack. They have been relentlessly drilling him over and over in regards to his past ties with Cornelius and Zira. Governor Breck is fearful that Cornelius and Zira's baby may still be alive, and of course he is right. Armando finally cracks under the tremendous weight of the lengthy interrogation and takes his own life by jumping out of a five-story window. Thus giving his life for Caesar's secret.

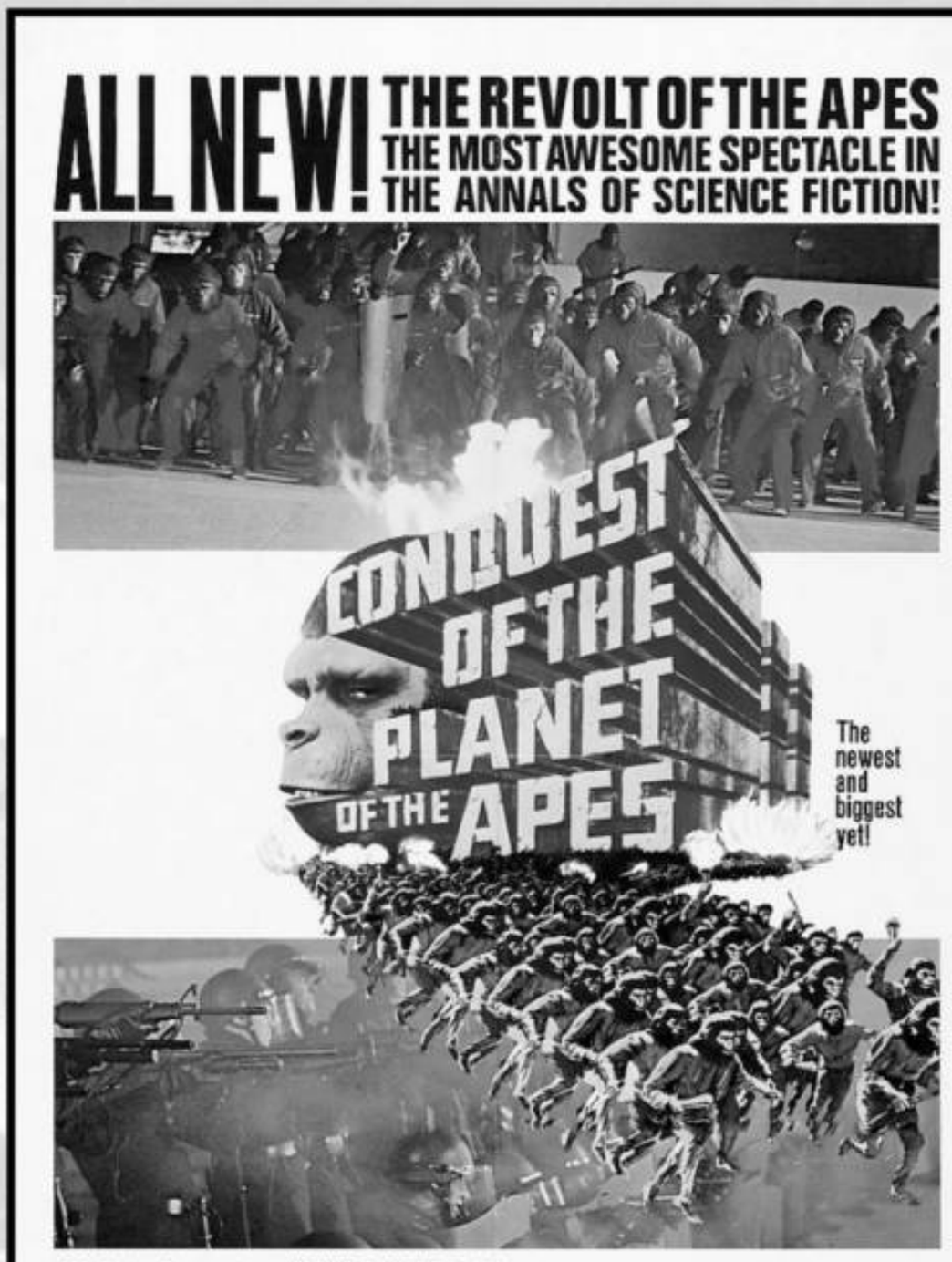
Upon hearing the news of Armando's death, Caesar is distraught. This begins a chain reaction within Caesar, his anger has now transformed him into a rebellious force. He goes around the

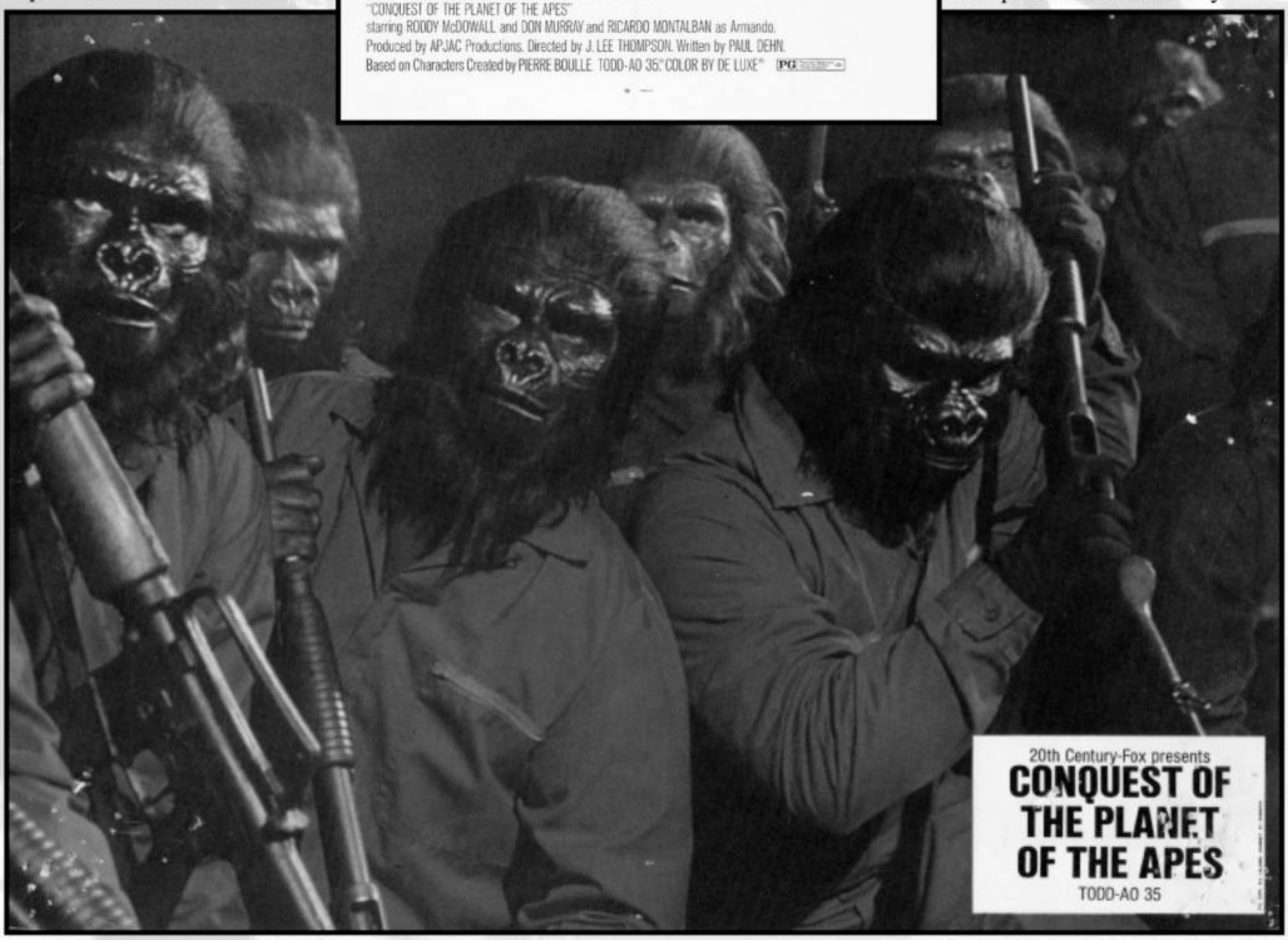
city giving significant glances at other apes. They all begin to rebel in slight ways against their owners. Caesar puts together an underground army of apes. They acquire plenty of knifes, guns, and yes, even a flame thrower.

Caesar does make a human friend. Mr. Macdonald, who is an aid to Governor Breck, sympathizes with Caesar and is appalled by this absolute form of modern slavery. Caesar explains to him that without power, gained through a revolution, the apes will never escape slavery.

The climax to this film is very powerful. Caesar takes his army to the streets of the city, overturning everything in sight. Some of these scenes are rather violent, many apes and humans alike are killed. In one particular scene, Governor Breck's police force savagely shoot and kill about a dozen apes. While most of the city burns and Caesar's army has worked to a successful rebellion, Caesar surprisingly spares the life of Governor Breck. In what may be the best speech given in all five films, Caesar explains that now it is time for man to be dominated. *But* Caesar ends his speech by saying that the apes will indeed be humane and give compassion to the humans.

So a drastic film, filled with overtones of slavery and rebellion, ends on somewhat of a positive note. But there is an alternative version of this film that not only has more violence, but added gore as well. In that version Caesar ends his speech with zero compassion for humanity.





This movie was an absolute joy to watch again. If I had to pick any of these films to watch at random, it would be this one. The settings, acting, and dialog are all well crafted. This film delivers a more adult tone, through dark storytelling. I just wish the fifth and final movie could have been as good.

Battle for the Planet of the Apes (1973)

Ape Shall Not Kill Ape!

The final installment of the Apes saga begins with a recap of the two previous films. Now in the year 2001, Earth has been devastated by nuclear war. Caesar now governs a group of apes and humans, trying to live together in a jungle type setting. But the humans here are treated like the lesser; Caesar still believes that only with time can apes learn to fully trust man. He is still pretty upset over the whole slavery thing from the last film. By now Caesar has had a son, a boy-ape named Cornelius. There is a new brutish gorilla general named Aldo. And we have a new orangutan named Virgil, who seems to know everything about everything.

It strikes me funny that this film takes place only 20 years after the events in *Conquest*, and all other apes have already acquired the power of speech. They have also fallen right back into their roles from the first film: orangutans are super-smart, chimpanzees are mainly pacifists, and gorillas are war loving beasts. This all seems a little too fast, but it is convenient for the story.

MacDonald's brother from the last film, who is referred to as "MacDonald" (I know, bear with me here), is Caesar's political partner and advisor to the human side of this community. Caesar, MacDonald and Virgil embark on a mission to the destroyed city in search of old data tapes that contain Zira and Cornelius's interrogation statements. Caesar wants to know exactly what was said about Earth's future from his own parents' confessions.

Underneath the city, among radioactivity, lives a group of humans. I like to consider them Mole-People. They do not have telekinetic powers like the mutants in the second film, they are just rather sickly. Caesar and friends narrowly escape the mole-people,

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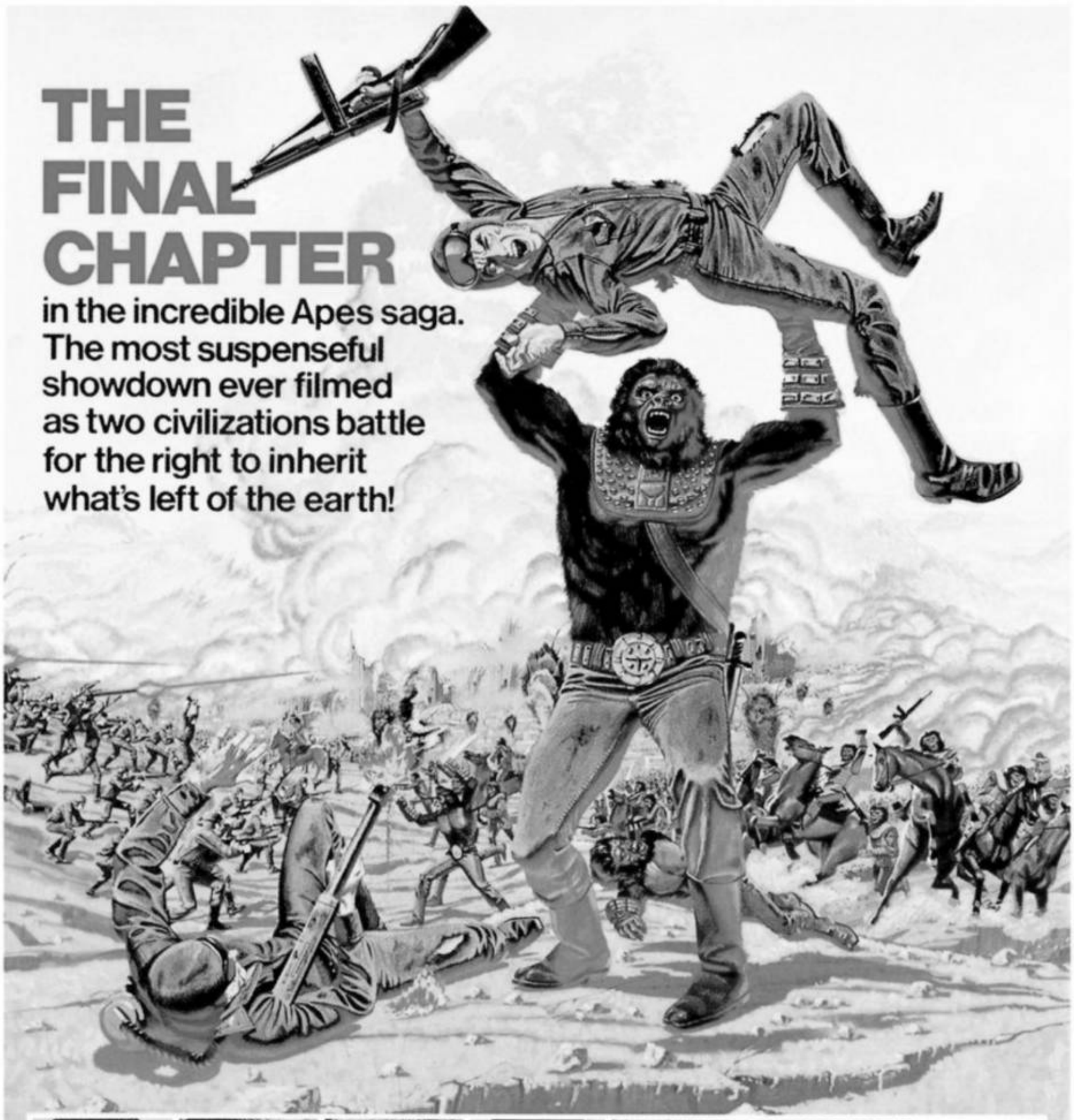
THE FINAL CHAPTER

in the incredible Apes saga.
The most suspenseful
showdown ever filmed
as two civilizations battle
for the right to inherit
what's left of the earth!



BATTLE FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES

20th CENTURY-FOX PRESENTS AN ARTHUR P. JACOBS PRODUCTION

"BATTLE FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES"

STARRING RODDY McDOWALL · CLAUDE AKINS · NATALIE TRUNDY · SEVERN DARDEN · LEW AYRES · PAUL WILLIAMS · And JOHN HUSTON as The Lawgiver

DIRECTED BY J. LEE THOMPSON · PRODUCED BY ARTHUR P. JACOBS · ASSOCIATE PRODUCER FRANK CAPRA, JR. · SCREENPLAY BY JOHN WILLIAM CORRINGTON & JOYCE HOOPER CORRINGTON · STORY BY PAUL DEHN · BASED UPON CHARACTERS CREATED BY PIERRE BOULLE · MUSIC BY LEONARD ROSENMAN

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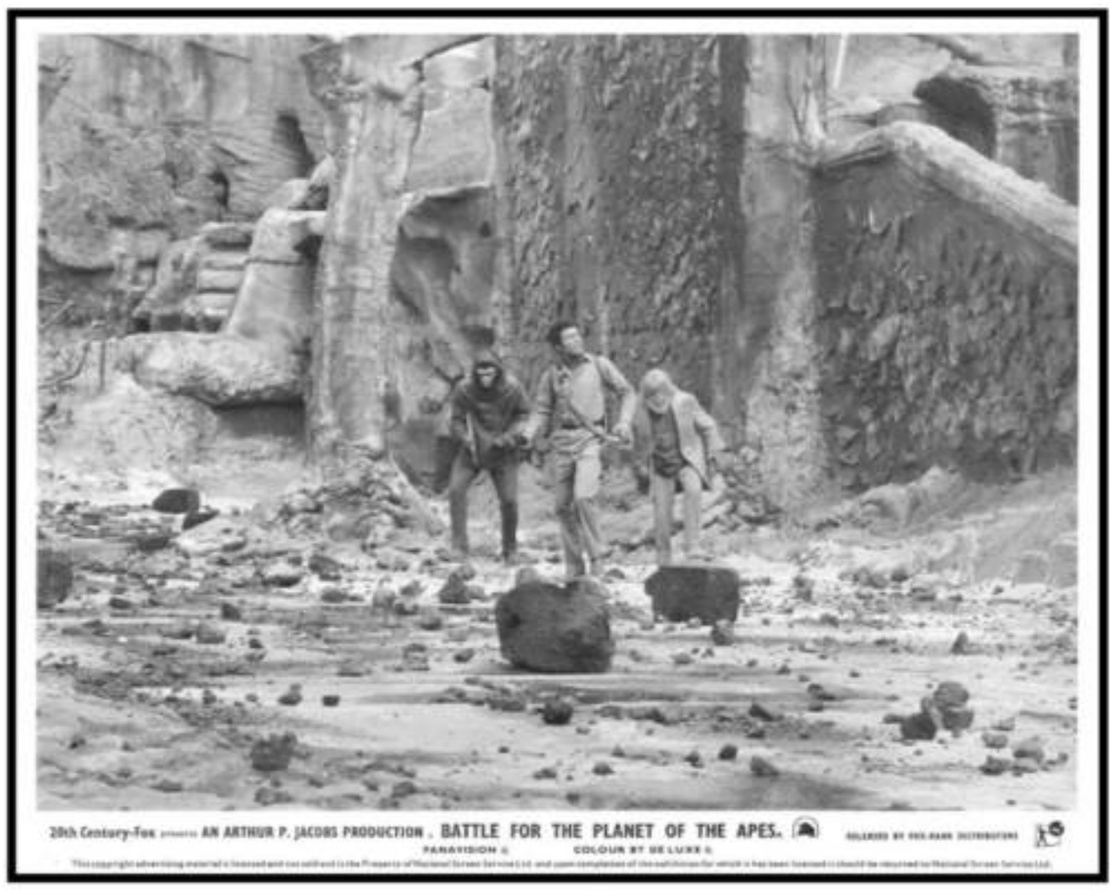
G GENERAL AUDIENCES



but they do listen to the old interrogation tapes and confirm the idea that the Earth will one day still be *completely* destroyed. The mole-people begin to gather up weapons and vehicles, intent on following Caesar back to the village, with plans to destroy every last ape.

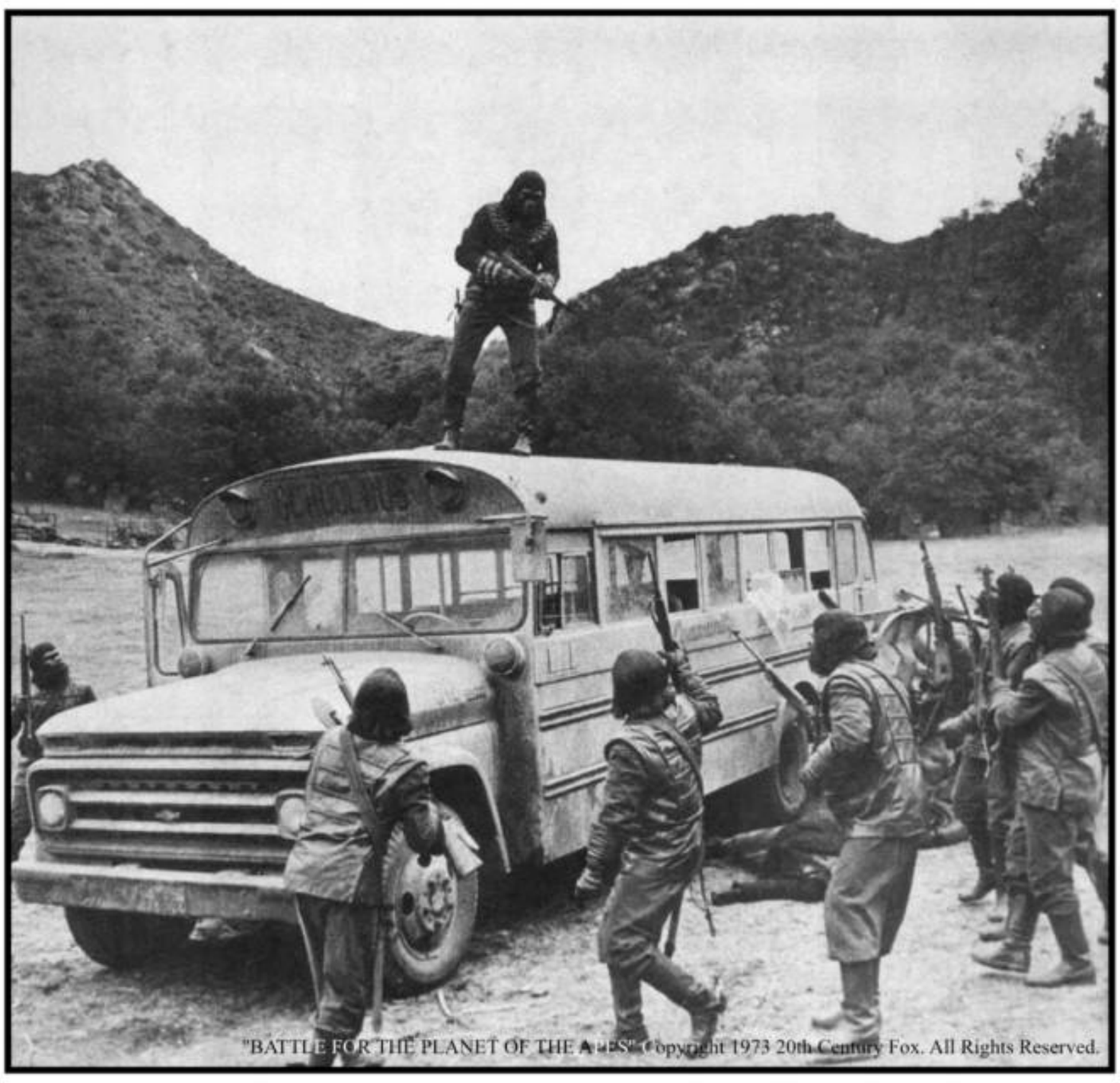
The mole-people's army consists of a few beat up cars, motorcycles, and a school bus. They are a raggedly bunch, to say the least. The obvious low-cost to produce this film shows through greatly in the mole-army.

Caesar's son then makes the mistake of overhearing Aldo address his fellow gorillas, telling them he plans to overthrow the great Caesar himself. He is then caught by Aldo and fatally injured. Little Cornelius eventually dies on his bed, in front of his father Caesar.

The mole-people's army arrives and begins to bombard the village with mortar blasts and gunfire. In a clever move, Caesar has every ape in the village lie down and play dead. The mole-people enter the village and are taken by complete surprise, eventually retreating back to the nuked city.

In the final scene, Caesar confronts Aldo. Aldo's killing of Caesar's son goes against everything they've stood for: ape does not kill ape. Caesar, seeing red, goes against that law as well, and kills Aldo in front of everyone. Through that murder, Caesar realizes that *ape* is actually a lot closer to *man* than originally thought.

This is without a doubt the worst film in the series. Although I agree with it's message: the emotion to kill *may* reside in us all, primitive or not. The film is poorly delivered; there is a lack of anything really epic here. The scenery and villains were just far too bland and uninteresting. I like the effort to wrap the story around back to the beginning, but I am glad to see they didn't try and push out another feature film after this clunker.



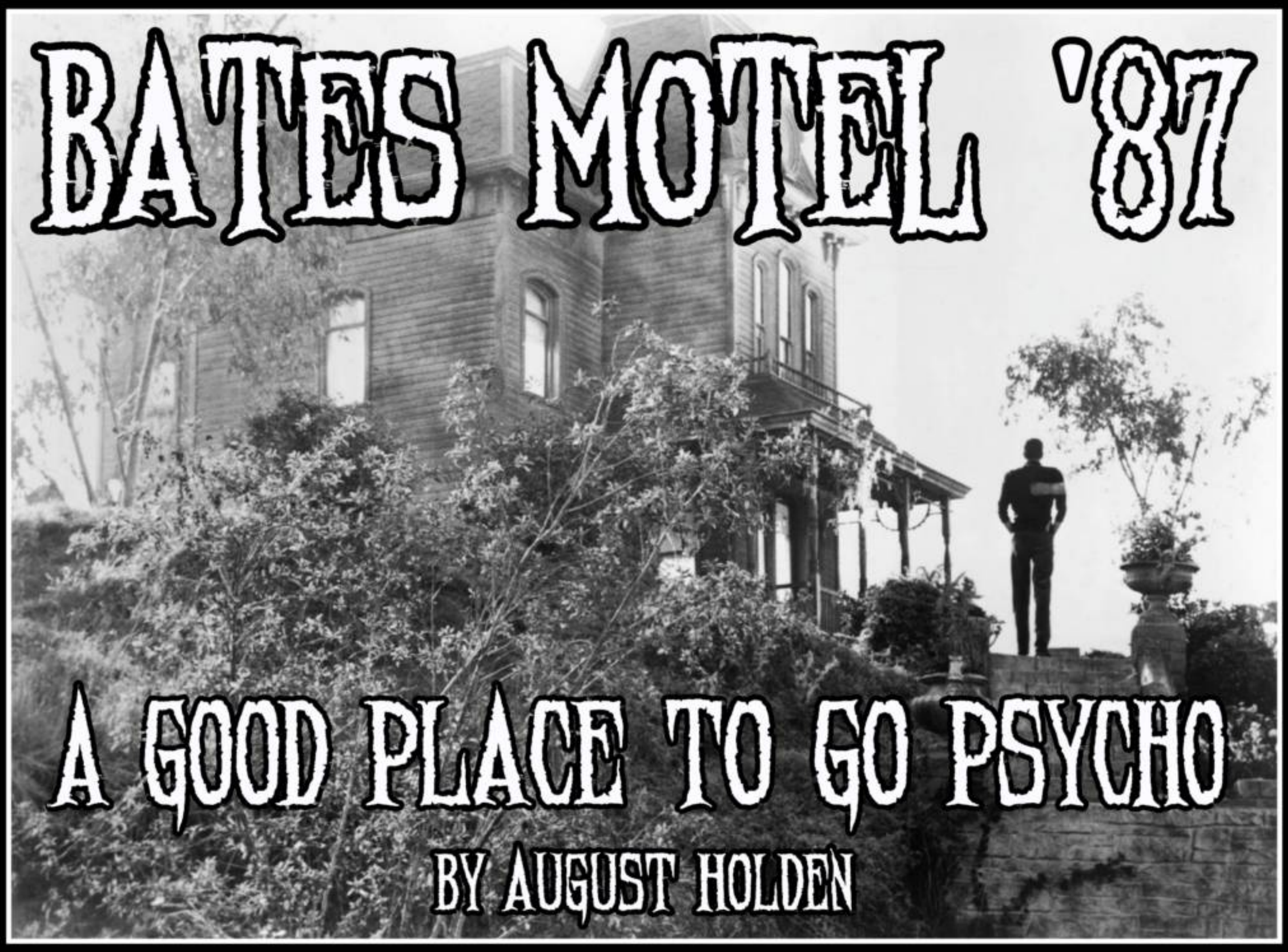
Conclusion

I love this series. As a whole, this is probably my favorite sci-fi film saga of all time. Re-watching them, I have gained a new respect for *Beneath* and *Escape*. All five films tried to stand on their own, all drawing in from and expanding the mythos of the first film. The core questions found within these films, many of us still ask even today:

Can we ever be at peace, with ourselves or with animals? Is there any significance in life greater than raw power? And will mankind ultimately meet his demise in an inevitable nuclear holocaust?

Time will tell.

BATES MOTEL '87

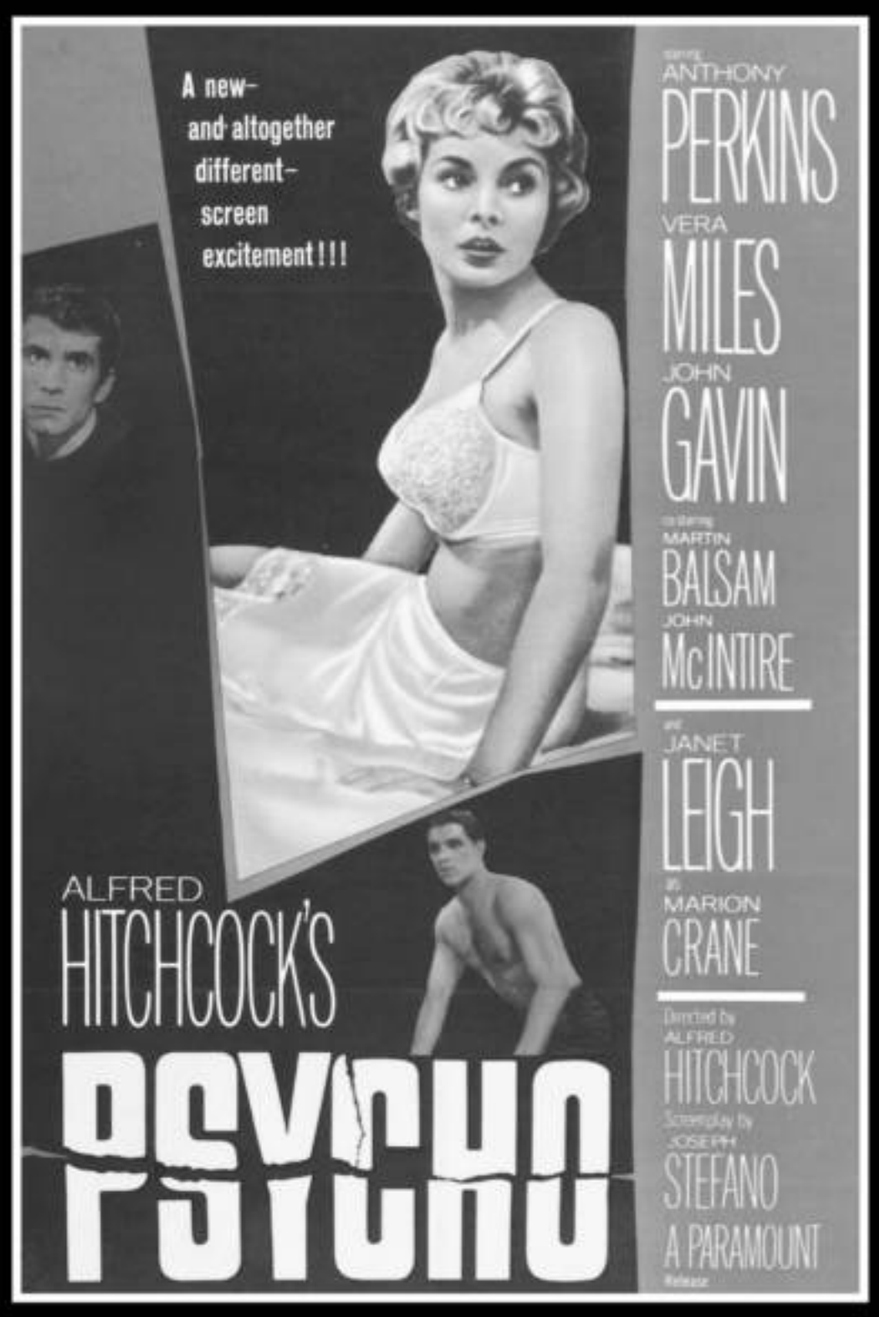


A GOOD PLACE TO GO PSYCHO

BY AUGUST HOLDEN

Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* – to call it anything less than a sterling masterpiece would be a cruel understatement. In 1960, at the time of its theatrical release, *Psycho* shocked audiences by pairing together a flawless blend of chilling horror and taut psychological intensity. It also served as the public's first taste of the 'slasher' genre, which would find prominence during the 1980s (despite later films focusing purely on the visceral elements). Today, many still view *Psycho* as Hitchcock's crowning achievement and a testament to his visionary status as an auteur.

As much as the infamous 'shower scene' has become ingrained in the collective consciousness of movie-goers, the character of Norman Bates equally achieved an undeniable icon status. Norman, a man so fanatically devoted to his mother that it drives him to kill, was played to perfection by Anthony Perkins. The role seemed nearly tailor suited for him, and Perkins not only captured the pathos and underlying madness of Norman Bates, but helped to breathe life into a character that seems at once both psychotic and pitiable.



Psycho was a resounding box office success, but Hitchcock was not one to dabble in sequels and for many years few were brave enough to attempt a follow-up to such a highly-regarded film. After all, the ending didn't leave much room for a sequel…or did it?

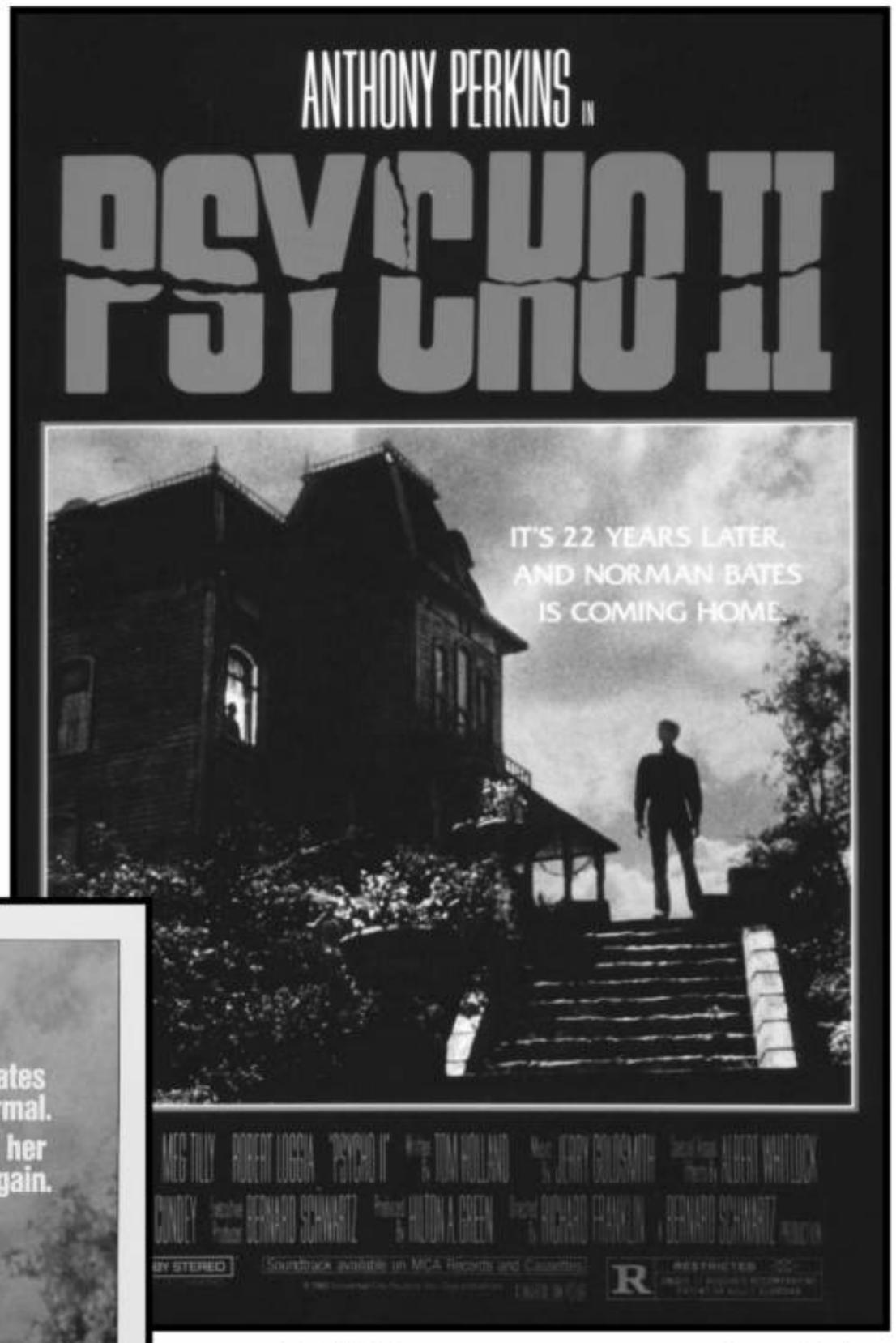
In 1983 *Psycho II* was released, produced with a modest budget of only $5 million dollars, the film grossed over $34 million. The story follows Norman who, after 22 years of psychiatric care, is declared 'mentally sane' and allowed to return to his motel. He starts the business back up but when strange things begin happening and the body count rises, Norman becomes worried that he hasn't seen the last of mother.

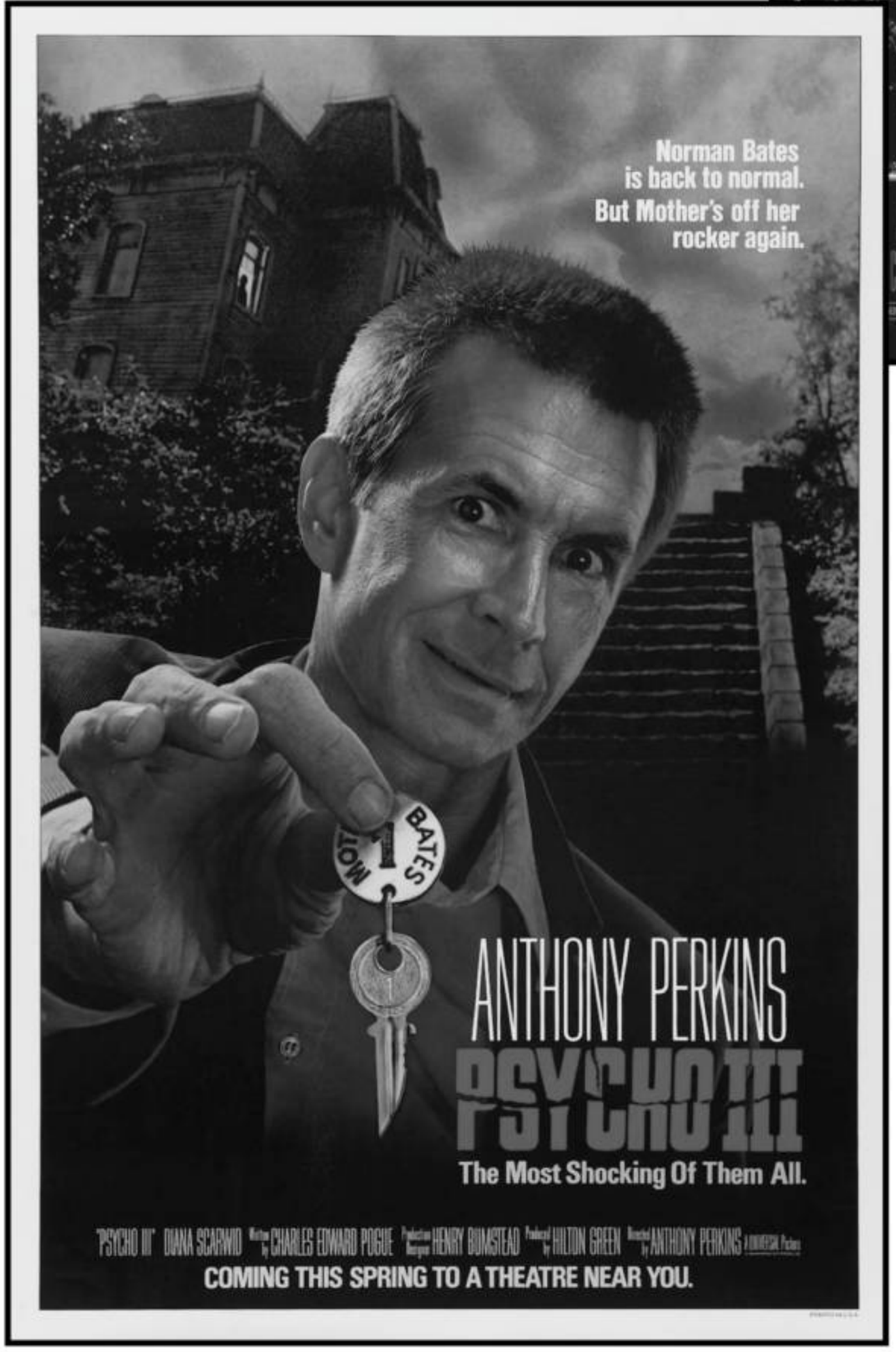
Psycho II is surprisingly well-written and a worthy continuation of the original film.

There are a number of twists in the plot and it doesn't hurt that Perkins returns in the role of Norman. Vera Miles also revisits her role as Lila Loomis, while newcomer Meg Tilly does a fine job as Mary Samuels, a visitor to the motel.

In 1986 *Psycho III* hit theaters, not only starring Perkins but also under his directorial guidance, the third outing adopted a more graphic visual tone, settling for over-the-top gore absent from previous the films. There's also a plentiful helping of Hitchcock's trademark black humor, which had been missing from *Psycho II*. This time around Norman falls in love with a young woman, much to the chagrin of his beloved mother (of course). Norman's situation is further complicated by a nosy reported and a shady new employee – both eager to discover his secret.

Despite being Perkins' debut as director (the only other film he directed was 1988's horror-comedy *Lucky Stiff*), *Psycho III* succeeds on many levels and is a worthwhile addition to the continuing *Psycho* saga. Unfortunately, it didn't fare so well at the box office and Universal began to rethink the franchise's future.





In 1987 an attempt was made to bring the Bate's legacy to television, in one form or another. The result was a spin-off unrelated to the previous *Psycho* films, save for the original. Airing July 5th, 1987 on NBC, *Bates Motel* tells the story of Alex West (played by Bud Cort), a former mental patient who had befriended Norman Bates at the asylum. After Norman dies, Alex inherits the notorious Bates Motel – it's a timely coincidence too, as Alex is allowed to leave the institution soon after. With an urn of Norman's ashes, he travels to the motel in hopes of restoring the business to its former glory.

Much to Alex's surprise he finds that a young woman, Willie (Lori Petty), has taken up residence in the abandoned motel. Eager to keep her living arrangements permanent, Willie pledges to help Alex get the place running in exchange for room and board. After finding a reliable contractor (Moses Gunn) to start on the renovations, peculiar incidents begin to occur. Is something trying to prevent the opening of the motel? Is Alex going crazy or has Norman's mother returned from the grave for some spectral shenanigans? The viewer is posed these questions but, before any resolutions arrive, the movie takes a surprising detour…

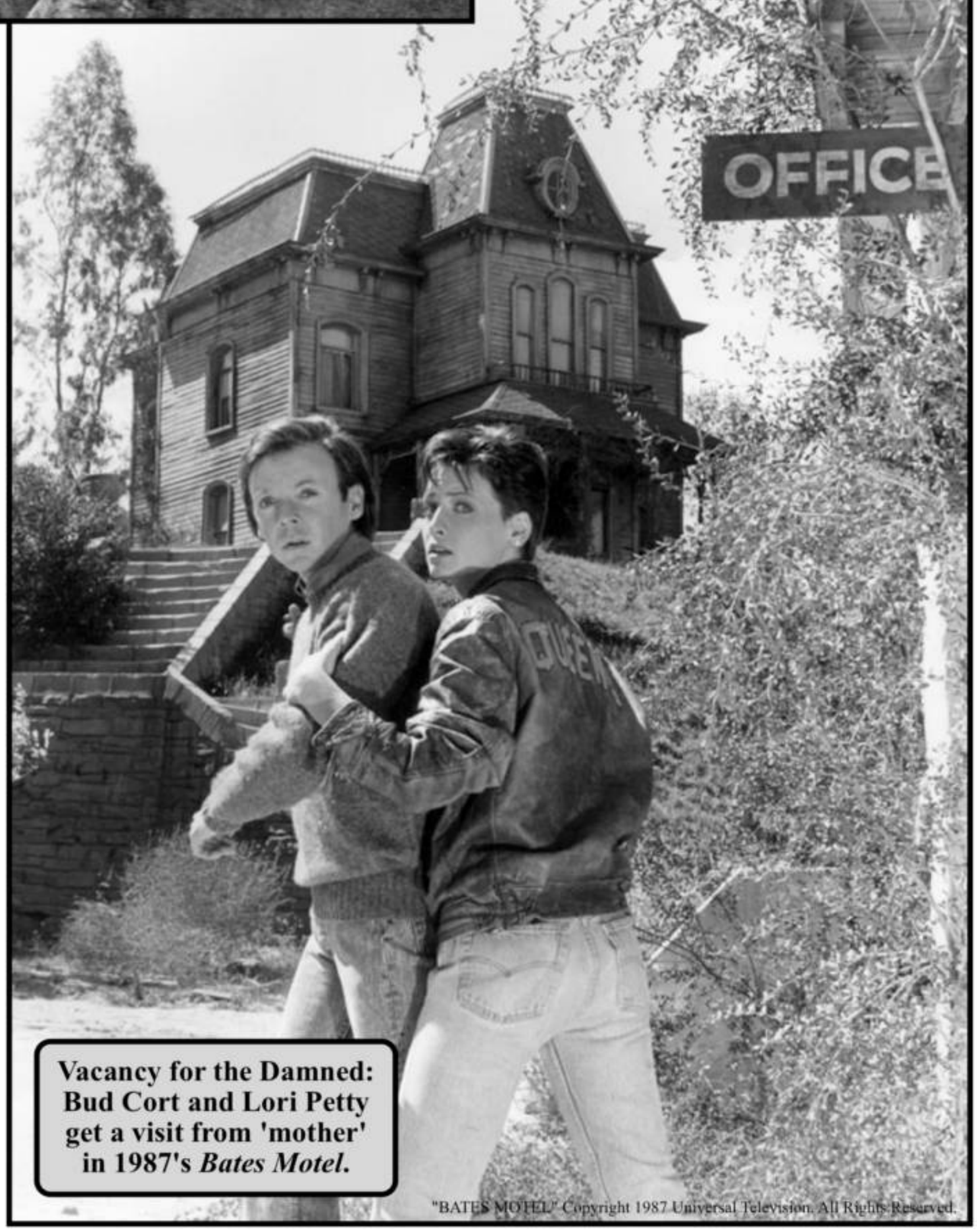
Alex is able to open the motel, thus branching into what is, essentially, a new story. A portion of *Bates Motel* diverges from the central plot to focus on a woman who arrives at the motel; she claims to be writing a book, but she's really planning on committing suicide due to a sorrowful string of failed relationships. Right before she's about to end her life, a teenage girl enters her motel room. The girl is able to postpone the suicide by inviting the woman to a party her friends are having at the motel. It's an odd turn for the film to take, but we find out that the teenage girl and her friends are really ghosts – all victims of suicide – and seek to stop the woman from going through with the heinous act herself.

By the end of the movie we return to the main plot, which sees Alex uncover the identity of who had been trying to sabotage the re-opening of the motel – a slimy, unscrupulous banker, dressed as Norman's mother no less!

Universal had hoped that *Bates Motel*, a 90 minute television pilot (though not promoted as such), would find sufficient ratings to spark a television series. Sadly, it was met with an icy cold reception and NBC, or any other network, refused to fund the show.

Rumor has it that Perkins not only refused a role in the TV movie, but was so angered over the film that he instigated a very public boycott of it. In actuality this was far from the truth; in the early '90s Perkins stated that he was exceptionally eager to watch *Bates Motel* when it aired on television. Though, after viewing it, he found the television movie to be "terrible."

One is unable to get around the fact that *Bates Motel* is, at times, played more for laughs – and its lighthearted approach may deter those looking for outright horror or a gripping, twist-laden thriller. Die-hard *Psycho* enthusiasts may also find *Bates Motel* to be too deviating from the source material – as many have stated after the TV movie initially aired. Even now, there's no



Vacancy for the Damned: Bud Cort and Lori Petty get a visit from 'mother' in 1987's *Bates Motel*.

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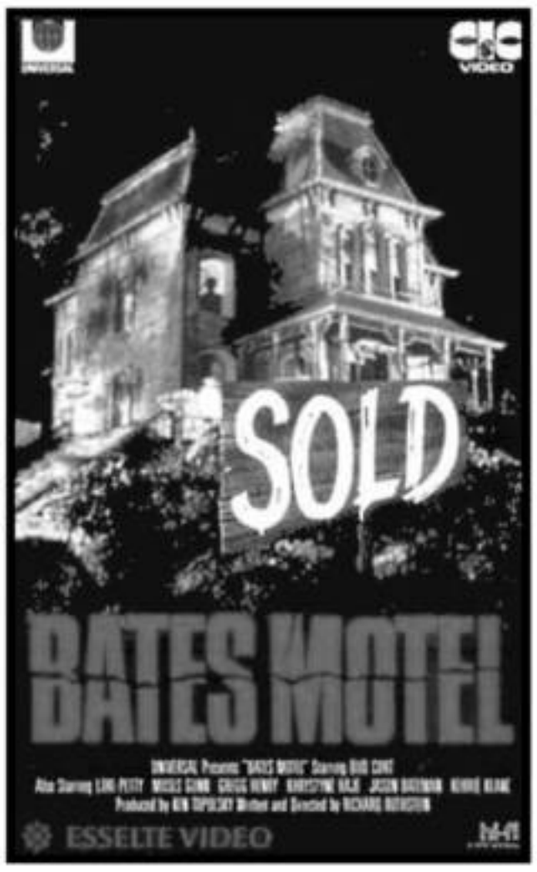


shortage of ill-remarks and utter dislike regarding the film on the internet. However, if one looks at *Bates Motel* on its own merit, removed from the preceding *Psycho* canon, it's a particularly intriguing concept. The anthology format intended for the series, had it been picked up, was akin to *Fantasy Island* – except that, instead of an island, the motel itself would be the catalyst for each new story. It seemed that the TV movie devised a format where each week a new person, presumably troubled by something dire or burdened by a dark past, would arrive at the motel and we, the audience, would follow their story as it's resolved. If the pilot movie was any indication, there would be some form of supernatural events going on, as the motel now appears to serve as a potential ghostly way station.

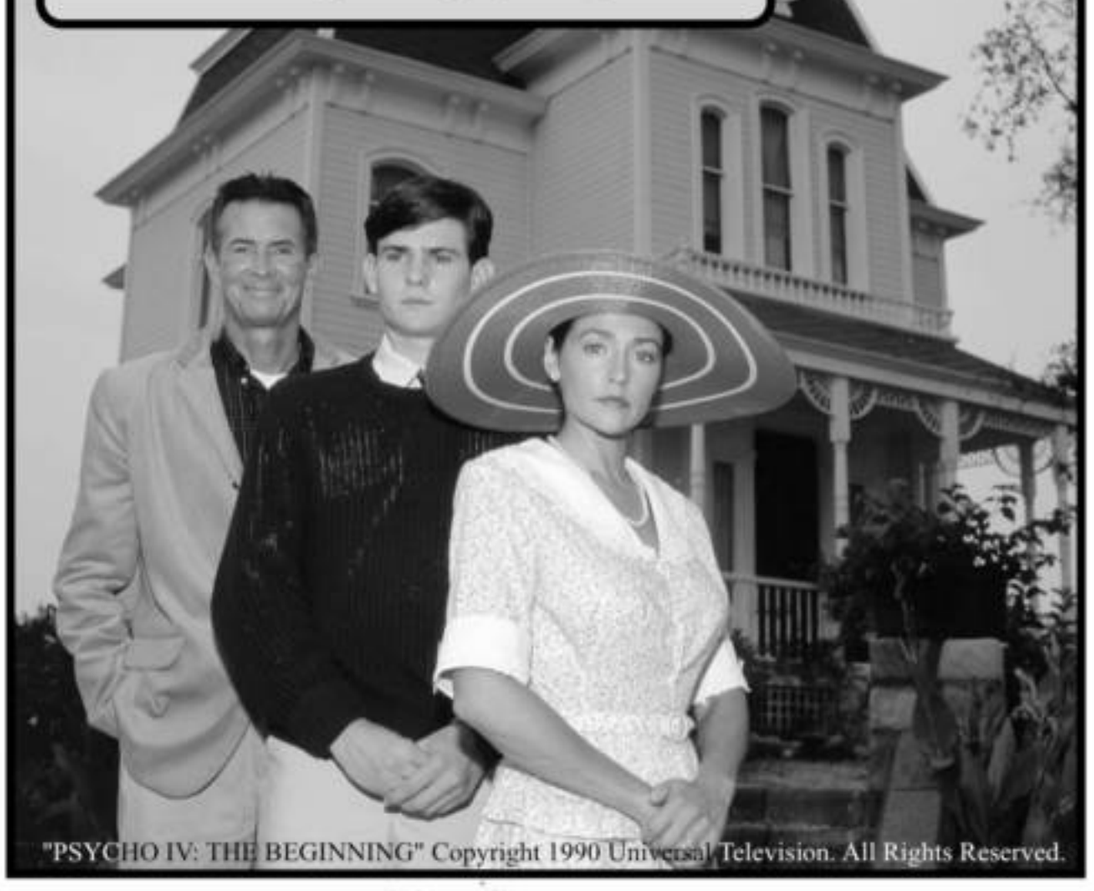
It would have been interesting to see what a few episodes of *Bates Motel* could have looked like. The TV movie was written and directed by Richard Rothstein, who had previously been the driving force behind *The Hitchhiker* television series (which lasted an impressive six seasons). Had Rothstein been able to apply similar quality to episodes of *Bates Motel*, there's a very good chance that the show would have found its way to a very receptive audience. It's too bad a network didn't give the potential series a shot, or at the least try to rework aspects that may have turned off viewers.

While *Bates Motel* was far from the ratings magnet Universal had been hoping for, it didn't kill off the franchise entirely. In 1990 a TV movie, *Psycho IV: The Beginning*, wrapped up the films by serving as a sequel/prequel. Perkins reprised his role as Norman, who – now trying to lead a normal life – calls a radio show to reveal the secrets of his past. Olivia Hussey (*Black Christmas*) turns in a brilliant, sadistic performance as Norman's imperious mother. Overall, *Psycho IV* might not be the strongest of the series' sequels, but it's a great ending to the franchise and brings around a fitting sense of closure. A fun bit of trivia – before *Psycho IV* aired on November 10th, 1990 on Showtime, Janet Leigh, star of the original *Psycho* and infamous shower scene victim, introduced the film to viewers.

Currently, A&E is working on a *Bates Motel* television series, unrelated to the 1987 TV movie. A&E's version will be a prequel to Hitchcock's original film, following the turbulent life of a young Norman Bates – a premise certainly not as inspired as the '87 movie, but more aligned with the *Psycho* lore.

1987's *Bates Motel* aired several times on television and on a few different networks, including Lifetime. It was never given an official VHS or DVD release in the United States, though home video copies were available in the United Kingdom, Japan, and Sweden in the late '80s. A rare and obscure film, *Bates Motel* is worth viewing – if for anything else, to see a new take on the *Psycho* legacy, and it's far more imaginative than Gus Van Sant's trite shot-for-shot remake of the original. Popular opinion notwithstanding, *Bates Motel* is a fascinating entry in the series, albeit a very different one.

Anthony Perkins, Henry Thomas and Olivia Hussey in *Psycho IV: The Beginning* (1990).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THANK GOD FOR MIL MASCARAS!

BY BRYAN L. YEATTER

It seems like it's been an awfully long time since masked wrestlers have been called on to save the world, but through the 1960s and '70s they were often mankind's first line of defense when the forces of darkness threatened. They certainly put down their share of evildoers – everyone from the Chinese mafia to Count Dracula; whenever civilization needed saving, you could always count on Santo, Blue Demon, and Mil Mascaras to stand athwart the nefarious plans of some mad scientist hellbent on world domination. There were others of course (Tinieblas, Neutron, Superzan, Blue Angel, Huracan Ramirez), but Santo, Blue Demon, and Mil Mascaras were the big three, and no one bitch-slapped more netherworld beasts than they did. When those three titans of the ring teamed up, well, the bad guys never really stood a chance. The first time that trio of masked men got together it was to defeat the *Mummies of Guanajuato* in 1969.

Mummies. If it hadn't been for masked wrestlers, mummies would likely have taken over the world, first town-to-town, then seizing whole continents. We know this is true because masked wrestlers were called on to mix it up with mummies more often than most any other foe (mad scientists would probably take top honors as the most frequent and pesky nemesis of the luchador). Aside from *Mummies of Guanajuato*, there were also such titles as *Wrestling Women vs. the Aztec Mummy* (1964), *Santo and the Vengeance of the Mummy* (1971), *Castle of the Mummies of Guanajuato* (1972), *The Theft of the Mummies of Guanajuato* (1972), *Mummies of San Angel* (1973), and *The Mansion of the Seven Mummies* (1975).

After a while it appeared as though the mummies had all been vanquished, but then along came a professor of computer science to stir them from their repose. No, Jeffrey Uhlmann is not a mad scientist, just a mild mannered academic at the University of Missouri with a passion for lucha libre cinema. In 1999, Uhlmann was already telling people that he had determined to leave his job in a Washington, D.C. government research lab and move to a university that would be amenable to initiating a program in what he termed "Entertainment Engineering." Plainly stated, Uhlmann wanted to make movies, and his genre of choice was the fairly dormant lucha libre film. The genre's two most noteworthy stalwarts – Santo and Blue Demon – had by then passed on, and while the second generation in that line – Hijo del Santo and Blue Demon, Jr. – would participate in Uhlmann's epic revival, center stage went to one of the genre's true luminaries. As the elder statesman, no luchador today can match the status of Mil Mascaras. Aside from being preeminent among luchadores, Mil Mascaras also holds the distinction of having defeated more mummies than probably any man in history. That would be of help, as Uhlmann's plan was to pit him against the Aztec Mummy.

Uhlmann is obviously a longtime fan of the genre, for there is old school aplenty in *Mil Mascaras vs. the Aztec Mummy*. Shot over three sessions between 2005 and 2007, the movie is a refreshingly sincere work that neither takes itself too seriously nor seeks to lampoon its target genre. In other words, it's just good fun like the lucha films of old. There is even a 1950s-style robot thrown in for good measure.

The story, briefly, has Mil Mascaras being called in (seemingly by the Mexico City Police, though there are no obvious traces of Mexico, as the film was shot in Missouri) to investigate a series of robberies of local blood banks. Mil quickly learns that it has to do with the recent resurrection of an Aztec Mummy, and the Mummy's plans to take over the world with an army of zombie-like soldiers. Although the Mummy has the upper hand for a time, Mil manages to turn the tables and triumphs in the end (helped in part by the timely arrival of a group of fellow luchadores).

The primary objective of the enterprise may have been fun, but that should in nowise be taken to suggest that Mil Mascaras is not very serious about his craft and his work. Uhlmann can certainly attest to the passion and commitment that Mil Mascaras brought to the production. Aside from writing and producing, Uhlmann also played the part of the Aztec Mummy, and he has firsthand experience with how dedicated the luchador is to his craft. "When Mil escapes from his chains and punches the mummy," Uhlmann recalls, "he actually connected on all the takes. On the first (the wide shot) he nailed me so hard that it rotated the latex mask so that I couldn't breathe. That thing was molded to my head, and took help and baby powder to get it on."

Mil Mascaras faces a grave situation in *Mil Mascaras vs. The Aztec Mummy* (2007).

One wouldn't expect a professor of computer science to be accustomed to the rough and tumble world of lucha libre, but Uhlmann would certainly get a no-holds-barred introduction. "Afterward, I told him he almost dislocated my jaw," says Uhlmann. "His reply was, 'Hey Jeff, lookin' good.' In our final battle he threw me against that heavy wood and steel door and nothing was held back. You can actually see the door move on the impacts."

Not to worry, as Uhlmann managed to get his shots in as well. "I returned the favor, and you can see me strike him in the side of the head with my forearm repeatedly with a lot of force." And how did Mil Mascaras take it? "He got up dazed," Uhlmann says. "I asked how he was and he just smiled and said, 'Lookin' good.'"

As outlandish as the premise may have been, believability was still an obvious priority to Mil Mascaras. "If you look carefully at a lot of the fights," says Uhlmann, "you'll see punches and body slams onto the ground – which was often concrete – that are clearly real. The only one that looks bad is when I stomp at him and it's clear that I'm not doing it with full force. Mil wasn't happy about that."

Well, sure; after all, the man has a reputation to protect. But be assured that *Mil Mascaras vs. the Aztec Mummy* can only reinforce his legend, and the final confrontation with the Aztec Mummy will surely be considered a fine addition to a career already replete with highlights.

ARTWORK BY BRYAN L. YEATTER

Aside from Mil Mascaras and a host of luchadores (Hijo del Santo and Blue Demon, Jr. among them), the movie also features character actor Richard Lynch as the President of the United States ("Thank God for Mil Mascaras," Lynch says after receiving word that the Aztec Mummy has been defeated), and a cameo by

Richard Lynch as the President of the United States alongside the mighty Mil Mascaras.

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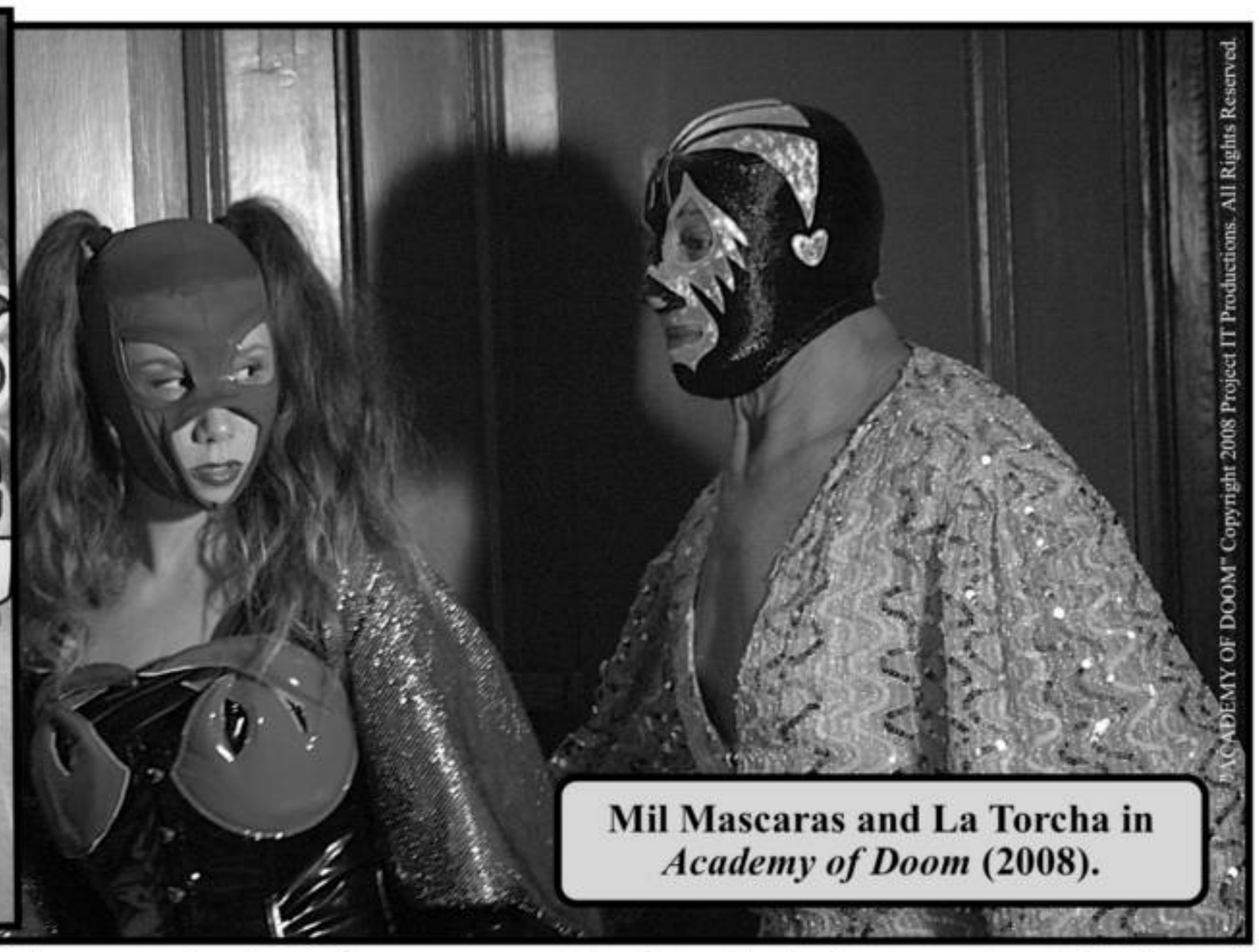


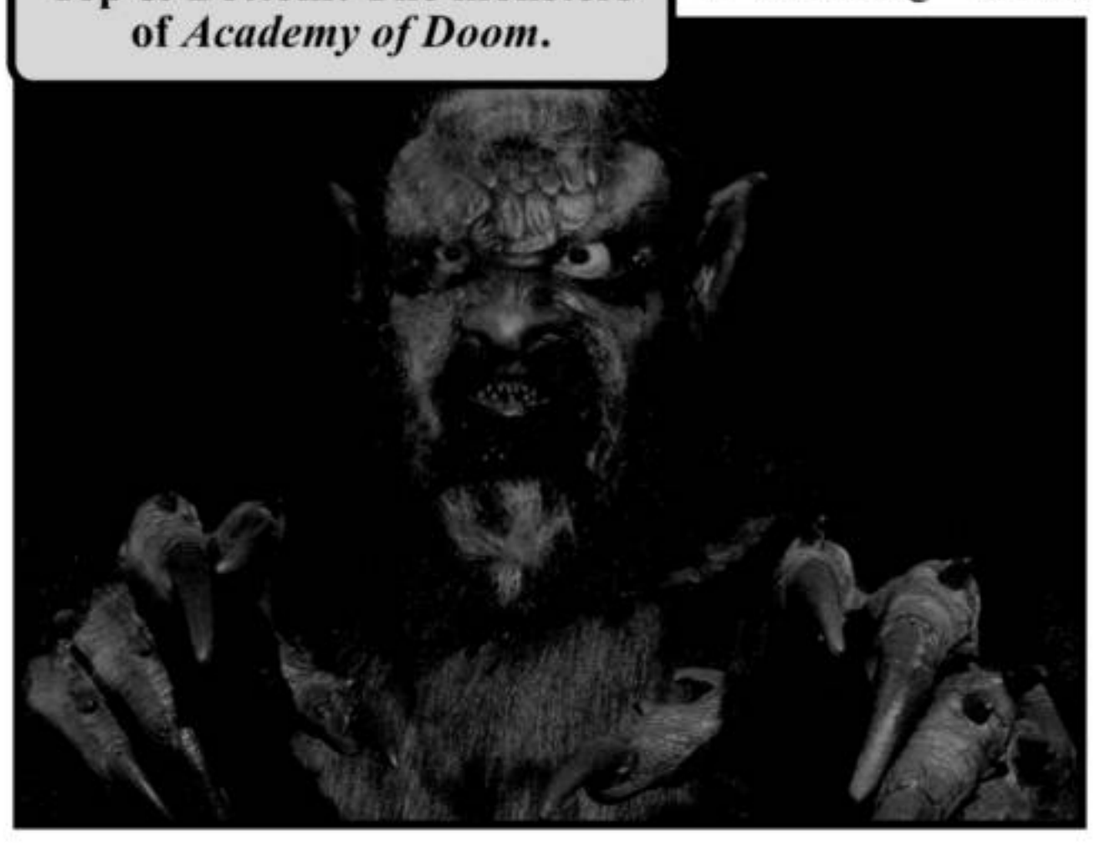
Mil Mascaras and La Torcha in *Academy of Doom* (2008).

P.J. Soles. While it's great to see the lucha genre back, and so well represented by the return to the screen of one of its all-time superstars, the better news is that *Mil Mascaras vs. the Aztec Mummy* is not the end, but a new beginning. As production was nearing completion, Uhlmann concurrently shot a second lucha film – *Academy of Doom* – with Mil Mascaras, and is now in postproduction on *Aztec Revenge*, his third collaboration with the wrestler.

Academy of Doom, which also recently saw release on DVD, finds Mil Mascaras sharing the spotlight with a number of luchadores, many of them female, as Mil is this time running a wrestling school for women. All of the luchadores on hand (male and female) come in handy when Mil must battle not only archvillain Luctor (played by Uhlmann), but also invading monsters from space. The story gets a little convoluted at times, but remains entertaining throughout. After a number of years on the festival circuit, the title had its Canadian premiere this past summer at the Fantasia International Film Festival in Montreal, where it opened the event's final evening.

This recent flurry of activity in lucha cinema is certainly welcome among fans who have long missed the spectacle of masked wrestlers mixing it up with monsters. Uhlmann is clearly doing his share to keep the flame burning, and hopefully his efforts will help start a full revival of the lucha libre genre. In the meantime, we can all say, "Thank God for Mil Mascaras!"

Top & Bottom: The monsters of *Academy of Doom*.



The villainous Luctor (Jeffrey Uhlmann) with his girls in *Academy of Doom*.

MOM, HELLRAISER AND FOSTER BROTHERS

By Dustin LaValley

As of right now, I've had four screenplays produced and available on DVD along with six books of fiction, short story collections and longer works and staff jobs for a few horror entertainment magazines. Outside of a hobby, I've been writing seriously in the horror/dark fiction genre(s) for ten or so years...a third of my life. I've won awards such as the Parnassus Award for Outstanding Achievement in Creative Writing from the State University of New York, the Hiram Award from *Shroud Magazine*, I've been in *The Year's Best* anthologies and recommended for the all glorious Stoker Award. My films have won awards, but nothing to do with the writing...sadly. I don't count those as personal highlights. (They're still proud moments.) I've recently signed a three book contract with one publisher, a two book with another with two screenplays in option purgatory.

What I'm getting at, is that none of this and what is to come would not be so if I hadn't been raised the way I had. With a mother who loved the supernatural aspects of literature, film and life itself, and ten or so foster brothers a good ten years older than myself who introduced me to the horror film.

The horror film is the focus here and my first horror film, while generally thought of as *Hellraiser*...is a little fuzzy of a memory.

Many nights as a child I snuck out of bed and watched those forbidden films from behind the couch. I'm still pretty sure that my parents and brothers and sisters knew I was behind there, they just gave up after the first few times I was caught.

One particular night stands out from the rest. I

was taken to the house of my older brothers' friend Bobby, where we watched *The Return of the Living Dead* and *Hellraiser*.

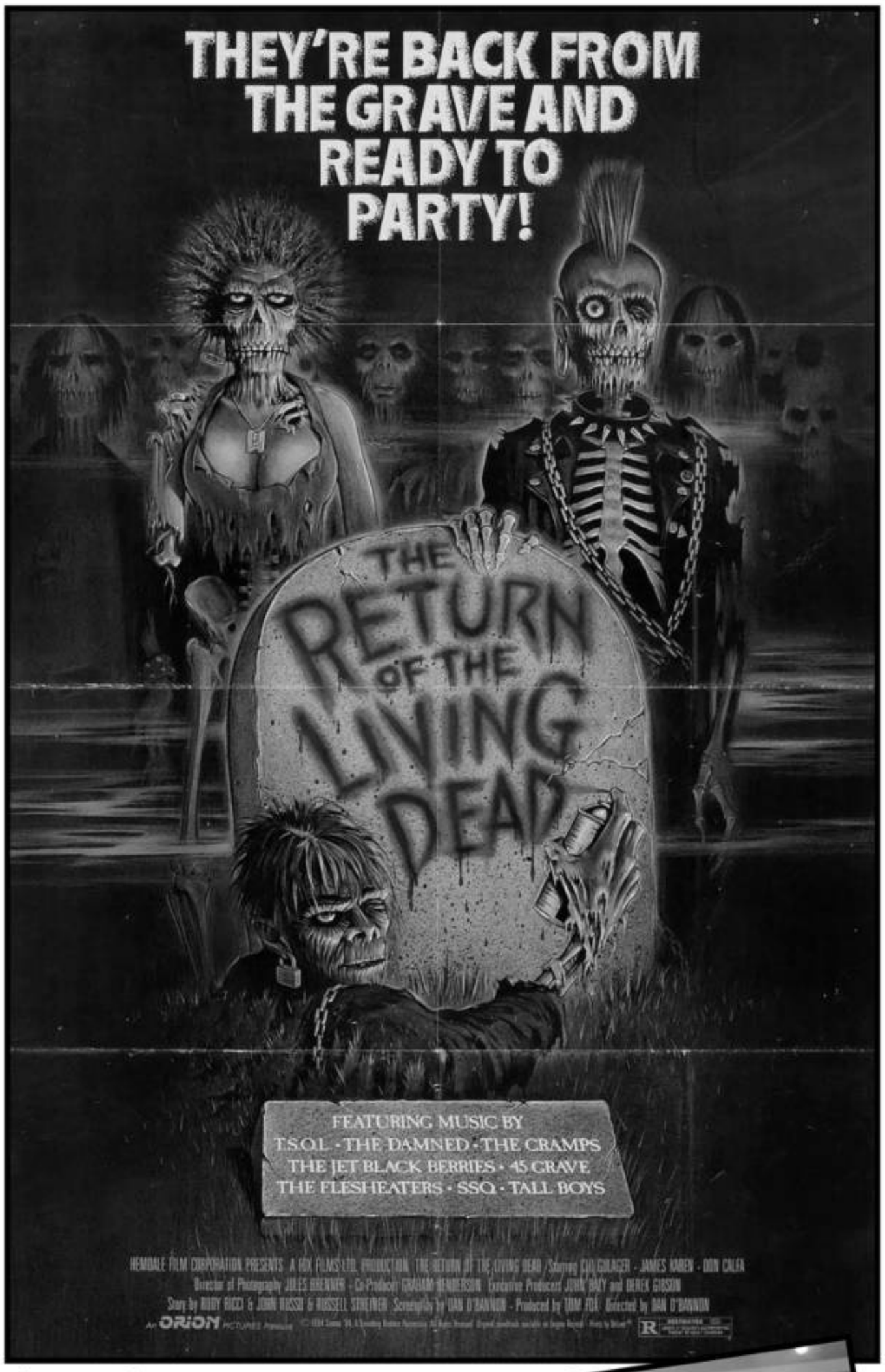
[Side note: *The Return of the Living Dead* influenced a group of kids from Leeds, England who would grow to be one of the best hardcore/thrash horror film influenced bands, Send More Paramedics. Named after the line when the ambulance is overtaken. This band would perform shows in makeup and do their interviews as their zombie characters. They disbanded a few years back, but you can still check them out on Youtube.]

I was no more than five years old on that night. I remember the night well because Bobby's family had horses, and there was a power outage which scared the horses and those horses with their whinnies, scared me. I was scared as I should have been, though not by the punk rock living dead or cenobites. The occurrence of a power outage and the frightened noise of horses...that's what scared me and still can: normalcy being jolted. The true life, the every day taken for granted and being uprooted. Not boogey men.

After that night I became more and more fascinated with the genre(s), falling deeper into the world of vampires, witches, man-made-monsters, zombies, ghosts, werewolves, psycho killers and...big-bugs which led to my childhood stories and art that began to show signs of the future. I had a neighborhood friend who was deaf and had special needs and, some days we would sit in his father's den and watch *Godzilla*, *King Kong*, *King Kong vs. Godzilla* and all their other mash-ups. I couldn't understand a word that kid said, but I understood how much fun he had watching those films on VHS and Betamax, which his father had recorded from the television. He'd laugh and whoop and, other than the words of the films and their main characters, that's about all I understood vocally, there was a lot of pointing at the screen and "Ohhh! Ohhh!" Though he had seen the films several times each, his excitement never tapered. Those were some good days.

It was around that time when I came to realize that not all horror is to frighten, shock or scare us, or even send a message. Some horror films are just plain fun for the sake of a good time, films such as *Tarantula*, *Them!* and *The Deadly Mantis*. (Though big-bug films did have messages, such as a general unease in the early nuclear days.) These big-bug films I discovered on my own, on a 13-inch black and white television with rabbit years that I saved from the trash and fiddled with until it worked well enough to get some local channels. After school or on days spent in bed sick, I'd watch whatever monster or horror I could get on that piece of crap, even if it was mostly snow and static.

During that time of childhood, I had



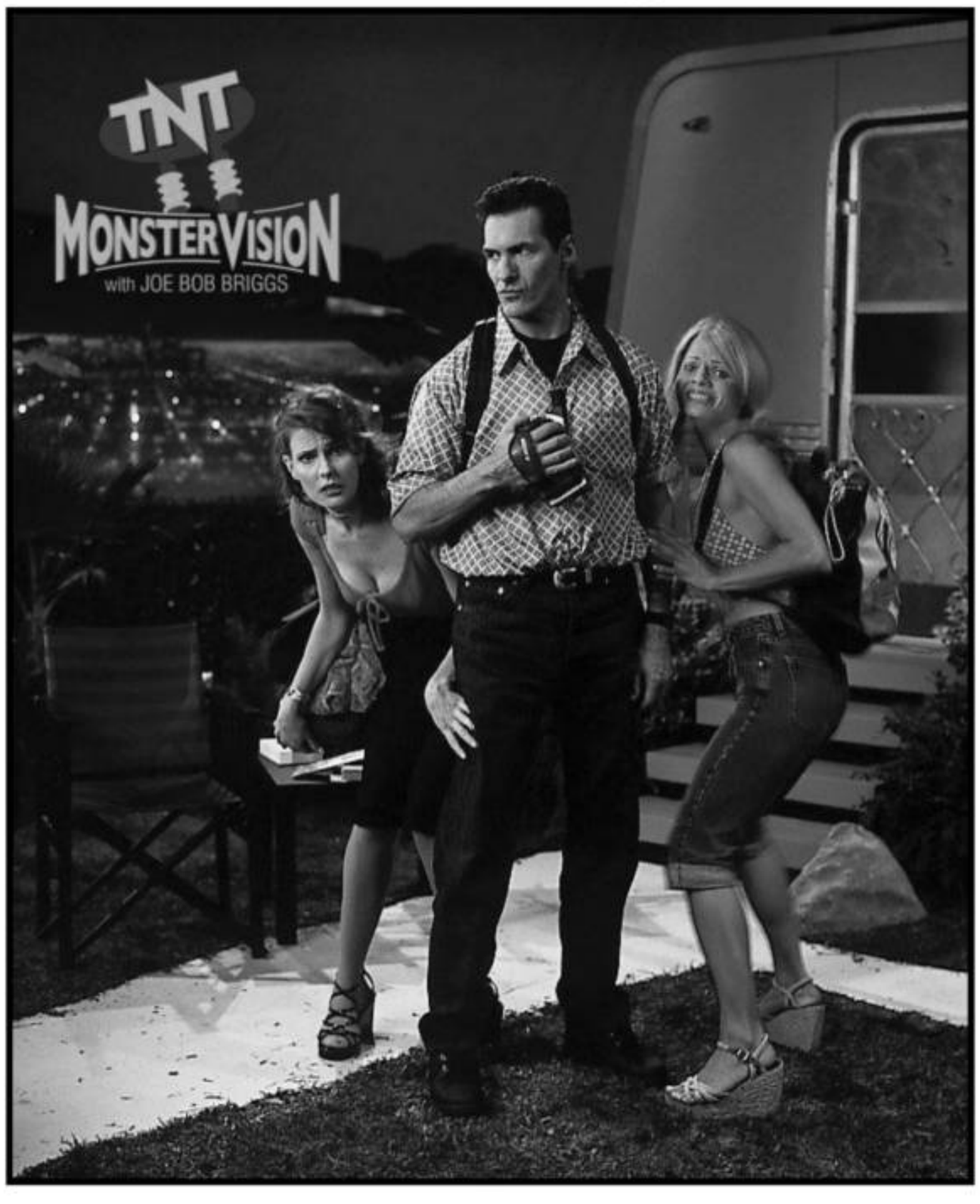
watched, and it was accepted by the family, films that were supposedly too scary for a child...but I also watched horror films that were driven towards the younger audience and with comedy.

It was my mother who introduced me to Abbott and Costello, which snagged my attention with *Hold that Ghost*, *Bud Abbott and Lou Costello Meet Frankenstein*, *...Meet the Killer, Boris Karloff*, *...Meet the Invisible Man*, *...Meet Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *...Meet the Mummy* and to this day I pop in a disc from the collectors set time to time for one of their horror-comedies. Universal Monsters have always had a place in my heart and when they teamed up with Bud and Lou, it was a double pleasure.

In this period I was to also find the television anthology such as (the original) *The Twilight Zone*, *The Outer Limits* and *Tales from the Crypt* being of personal importance. My mother and I would watch *The Twilight Zone* together, on rainy days and *The Outer Limits* when channel flipping. It was *Tales from the Crypt* that was more of a family viewing, the kids, all the boys eight to twelve of us at times,

and the two girls together in the family room, completely entertained. And it was those gruesome stories ushered by the Crypt Keeper that would follow me from child to teenager, a bridge of sorts.

When those overly awkward teenage years came, horror continued to play a major part of my life. Now a little older but none the wiser, I began watching more slashers and looking for the gore instead of story and merit. I was a standard male teenage horror fan in that aspect. I wanted blood and tits and, really that's about it. I began chasing down the *Friday the 13th*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street* and *Halloween* franchises and loving every moment. I discovered *Candyman* and Tom Savini's remake of *Night of the Living Dead*. Many of these slashers were from weekend nights spent watching *MonsterVision* with my buddy and fellow horror fan, Pat. Joe Bob Briggs became an uncle-



like figure to us. We'd love his intros and interruptions after commercials with body counts and decapitations. All week we would save our change and order the cheapest pizza around for our viewing of whatever *MonsterVision* had for us. *Tremors*, *Nightbreed*, *Maximum Overdrive* and *Child's Play* being the standouts of those nights with Pat and Uncle Joe Bob...the best remembered and many times, repeated.

Near the end of my teenage years and into adulthood, I found that it took more to gain my attention than some good special effects and a nice pair of fake tits. (I am not and never have been a fan of CGI, though ironically, I am and have been a fan of fake tits.) I wanted story, suspense, character and subtext. I wanted real, human derived horror and story-driven supernatural and revenge films. And I found them. Many times I was put off at how these films slipped past me, how I missed such great work and was disappointed in myself having been only then "catching up."

Within *The Thing*, *Cujo*, *The Howling*, *The Last House on the Left* (the 1972 original, look for my piece on the film in the grand anthology, *Butcher Knives & Body Counts*) and *Videodrome* I found what I was looking for and also found that it was becoming increasingly difficult to find anything good or of quality in current day productions. After days spent and wasted in college classrooms and afternoons sweating on skateboards and on BMX, a few friends and I would page through *Famous Monsters of Filmland* or as they preferred, *Fangoria* (I am not and never have been a fan of FanGo and after their recent "F**k you" to writers, shame on any writer who supports them) and try to find some decent titles found in the mix of the magazines. Renting from convenient video stores such as Blockbuster and Hollywood Video we'd manage a few every night and to our surprise, discovered some decent films which were usually...Italian.

Today, it's films like David Cronenberg's *Spider*, *The Devil's Backbone*, *Memento, Ravenous, Donnie Darko* and *The Machinist* that piques my awe and admiration. Films that challenge the viewer and require thought during and after viewing and perhaps, a second and third viewing to truly understand and admire. Yes, I'll watch anything from goofy B-grade trash to independent film-fest fare to soulless big-budget Hollywood, but those films have their place and time and don't manage more than a slight conversation afterwards. They don't draw you in and capture your attention, they don't make you feel for the character and feel the atmosphere and don't make you believe the story could happen to you.

Not that I'm over watching any of those films of the noted past, not at all. It's just as likely I'll gather some friends to watch *The Thing*, *Them!* or *Hold that Ghost* as it is to watch *Cujo*, *Halloween* or *Spider*.

It's a natural progression, a maturity that is not only seen in my film appetite but also in my own work. We grow up and sometimes, some of us don't leave our childhood toys in the past, in memories. Sometimes, some of us bring them with us, either in full view or in secret. In my case, *Scooby-Doo,* Disney's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and bootlegs of *The Simpsons Treehouse of Horror* episodes are in full view, in all their nerdy goodness for anyone to see and judge should they like.

When I was in elementary school, my parents were called in for a meeting after I drew a picture in art class of Santa Claus being burnt alive in a chimney. I wasn't scolded, all was fine. I was using my imagination. Today, I'm writing stories and novels and films for the enjoyment of readers and viewers and myself, sometimes I get scolded by reviewers and critics, other times praised and...all is fine. If it wasn't for mom, *Hellraiser* and my foster brothers, I wouldn't be here in these pages and I thank them.

Shadowland readers! Be sure to check out Dustin's latest novel, Spinner *– available now!*

SPINNER
a novel
From author
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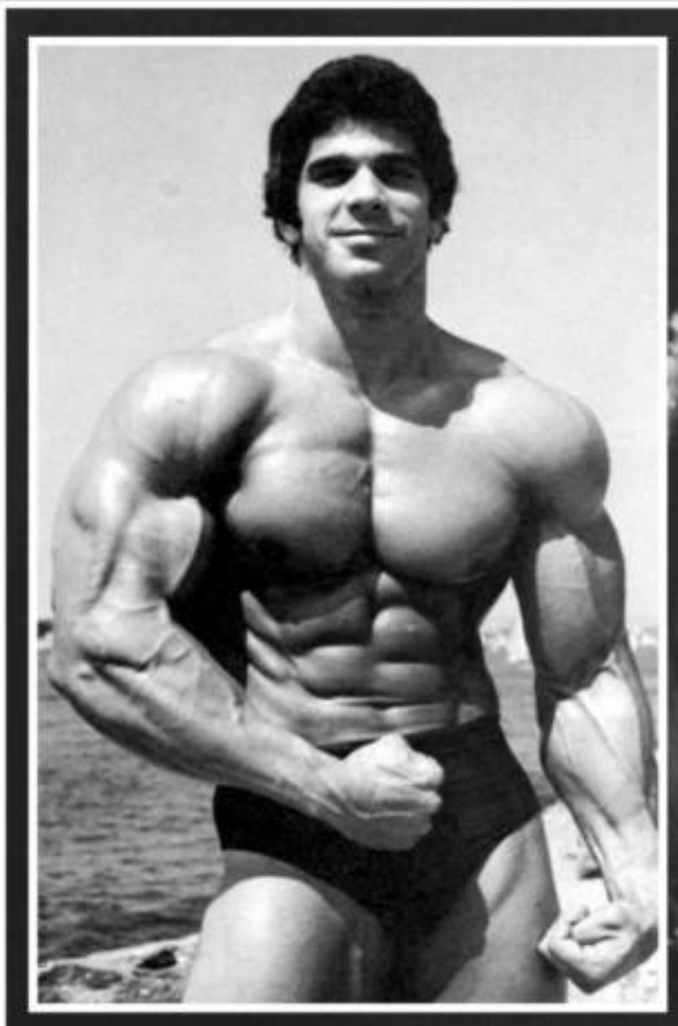

LOU FERRIGNO
THE INCREDIBLE ACTOR

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BY DWAYNE PINKNEY

Let's be realistic. When you hear the name Lou Ferrigno, one thing comes to mind…*muscles.* The Incredible Hulk and bodybuilding. Bodybuilding and the Incredible Hulk. The two are inseparable, yet the one thing nobody ever seems to comment on is Lou Ferrigno's acting ability. Yes, *acting ability.* If one looks beyond the surface of Ferrigno's famous role as the monstrous alter ego of Dr. David Banner, one finds a very complex, layered performance, perhaps one of the best ever on television, and in the process discovers that Lou Ferrigno is much more than a mountain of muscle. He's an actor, and a darn good one at that.

On November 4th, 1977 *The Incredible Hulk* pilot debuted and was a ratings smash. Writer-director Kenneth Johnson wisely took the best elements of the comic book character, namely the Frakenstein-ish misunderstood monster suffering from Jekyll and Hyde syndrome, and ditched the rest. Gone were the bizarre super-villains of the comics, and Bruce Banner, nuclear physicist and creator of the Gamma Bomb became the much more sympathetic and compassionate Dr. David Banner, physician and scientist. Johnson focused the series on the dramatic elements and situations surrounding the Hulk, and it worked. It worked so well that the series ran until 1982, somewhat of a milestone for comic book fare at the time.

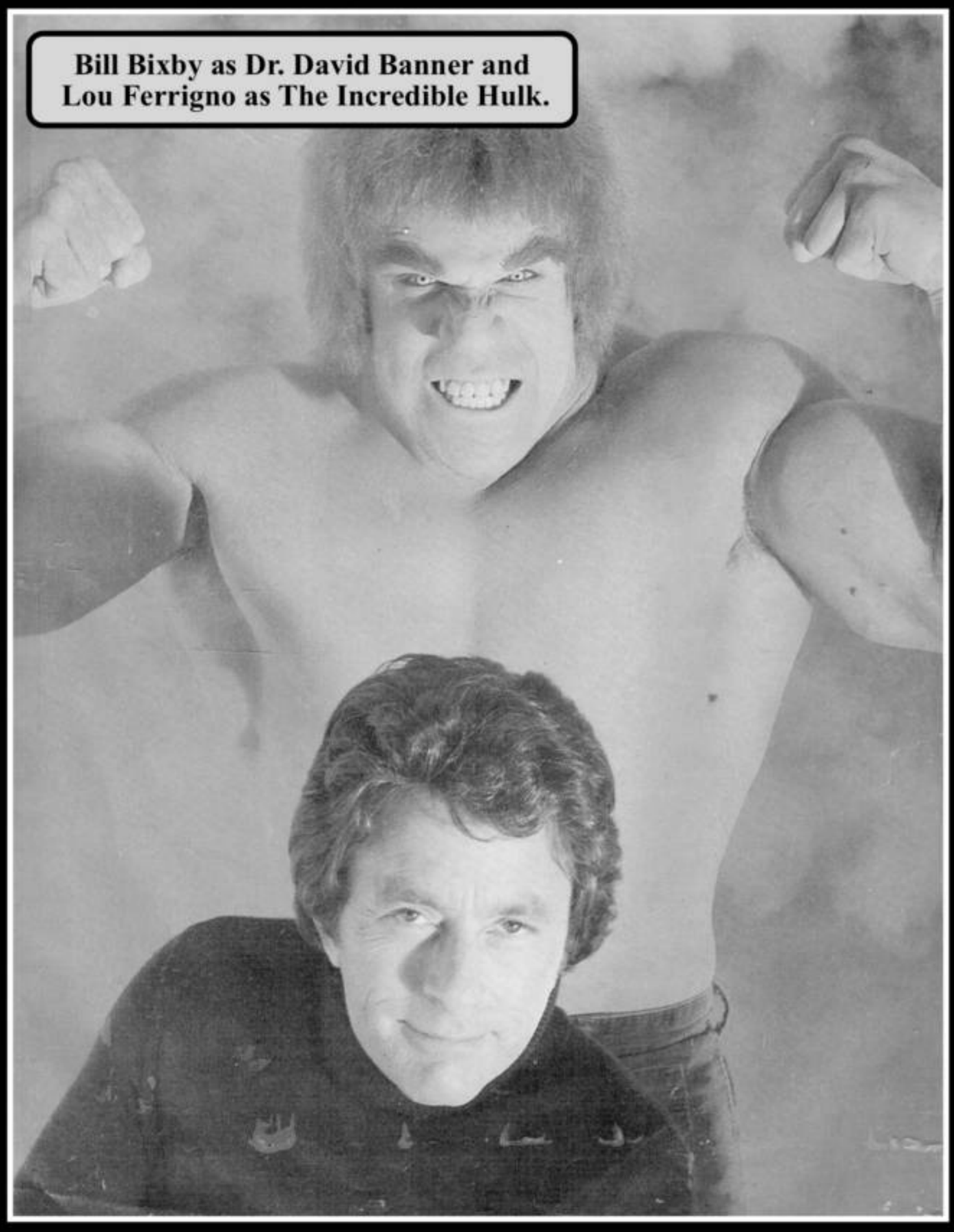
Kenneth Johnson quickly reined in Bill Bixby to play Banner, but who would play the Hulk? Initially, Richard Kiel, better known as "Jaws" to James Bond fans, was cast as the creature, but it quickly became apparent he lacked the bulk required of the role. Casting came down to two choices: Arnold Schwarzenegger and Lou Ferrigno. Being taller by two inches landed Ferrigno the role, and I believe as they say…*everything*

happens for a reason. For while Schwarzenegger went on to star in action blockbusters and became the more famous actor of the two, Ferrigno was simply born to play the Hulk, and does a far better job than I believe Schwarzenegger ever could have.

A Disability Turned Advantage

As most everyone knows, an ear infection when he was a child left Lou Ferrigno severely hearing impaired. As a result, he suffered through bullying in school that many of us can relate to. This eventually led him to developing his body as a means of coping. Ferrigno himself has often stated he was a fan of the Hulk as a child, and that he could relate to the character's anger, frustration, and inability to communicate. The Hulk was hounded and misunderstood, much as Ferrigno was by his classmates. This instinctive understanding of the Hulk's persona gave Ferrigno an insight into the character's portrayal that I feel would have been lost on other actors. There's a lot more to playing the Hulk than stomping around and growling at the camera. The Hulk does not simply rage, he is also capable of great tenderness. Some of Ferrigno's greatest moments on *The Incredible Hulk* happen not when he's smashing through a brick wall, but when he's interacting with children, or animals, or displaying the buried love and emotions of Banner. It is in these scenes that Ferrigno truly shines, and displays a range far greater than his more famous rival.

Since the Hulk is mute, (unlike his comic book counterpart who uses broken speech) his entire performance relies on facial expression and body language. It's really no different from the silent performances of characters such as Lon Chaney's Hunchback of Notre Dame or Phantom of the Opera. This is a difficult task even for today's seasoned veteran actors, but Ferrigno pulls it off with ease. There are striking similarities between Ferrigno's Hulk and Boris Karloff's portrayal of the Frankenstein monster. Both men are able to tap into the soul of their monsters and make them much more than one-dimensional boogeymen. Both created characters capable of great rage and equal tenderness, depending upon how they're treated. But, where Karloff's monster is indeed a killer, the Hulk's anger is kept in check by the subconscious mind of the gentle Banner. Though the Hulk's rampages could be truly terrifying at times, Ferrigno does an amazing job of convincing us that the Hulk is indeed an extension of Banner's personality…that it's still the heart and mind of a kind and gentle doctor inside this massive angry monster. I'll be taking a look at some standout moments of key episodes from various seasons which display Ferrigno's acting at its best.



Bill Bixby as Dr. David Banner and Lou Ferrigno as The Incredible Hulk.

Life and Death

Death, and how it affects us emotionally, is a theme that plays a key role in the origins of the TV Hulk. In the pilot episode, David Banner is consumed with guilt at his inability to save his wife Laura from a burning vehicle. This guilt leads to an obsession with finding the source of untapped human strength. Banner finds himself faced with mounting anger and frustration as he repeatedly tries to unlock the secret and fails. We all know what happens next. Banner discovers gamma rays are the key, exposes himself to an overdose of the deadly radiation, and unleashes far more strength than he bargained for. Unfortunately for him, he realizes too late that the discovery itself doesn't erase the underlying emotions. The guilt, anger, frustration…the *rage*, is still there. Only now it has a physical manifestation as The Incredible Hulk. The first transformation in the series' pilot episode takes place when Banner is changing a flat tire during a thunderstorm. It's a frightening scene

which still holds up well today. After pounding his car into a heap of wreckage the Hulk wanders off into the night. The next morning finds the creature in the nearby woods where he encounters a little girl and her father camping. A great scene and homage to Frankenstein has the Hulk smiling as he tries to befriend the little girl. Terrified by his appearance, she tries to escape but ends up falling into the lake. The Hulk shows genuine concern for the girl and tries to rescue her, but the girl's father misinterprets the actions as an attack and shoots him.

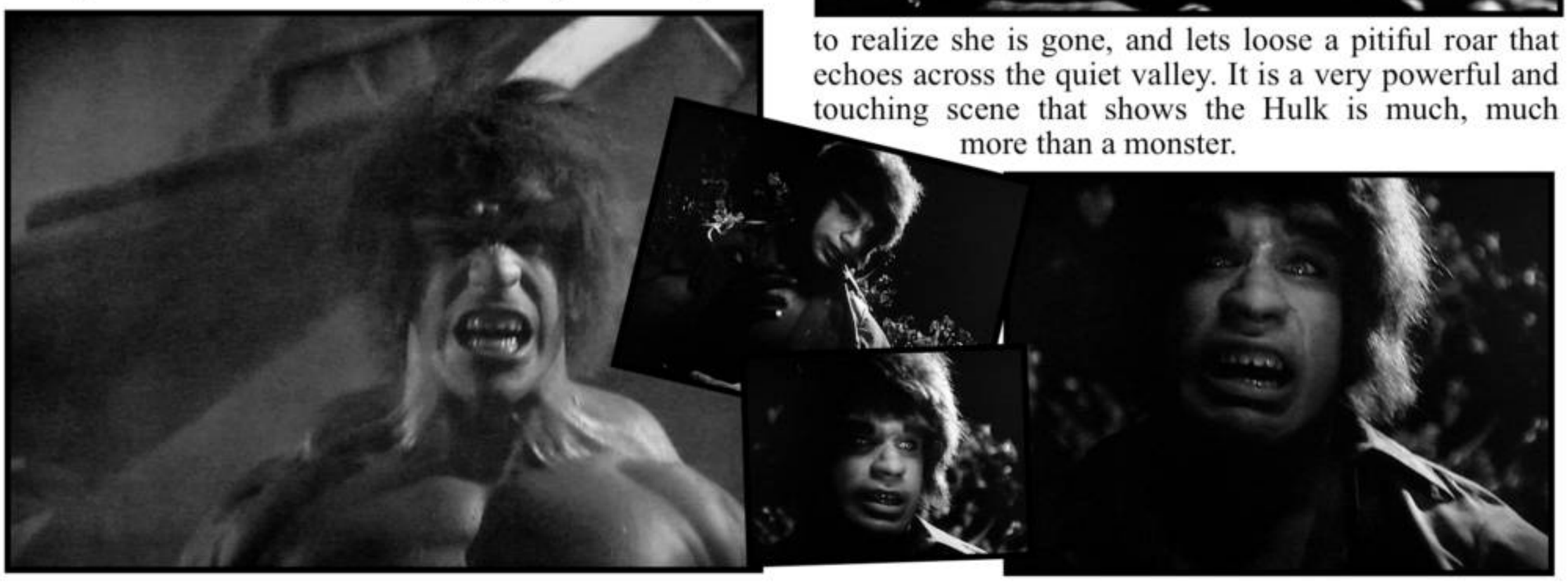
The pilot's second transformation is truly terrifying, and remains one of the most frightening scenes of the entire series. Still unsure of what has happened to him, Banner enlists the aid of fellow scientist Elaina Marks to try and measure his newfound strength inside a hyperbaric chamber at a remote, isolated lab. After trying for several hours without success to trigger his hidden strength, an angry, defeated Banner goes to sleep inside the chamber. Elaina Marks continues to monitor him while he sleeps, and ultimately, a nightmare about the death of his wife causes him to transform once more. It is in this scene that Ferrigno shines. He exhibits a rage that I have yet to see equaled on screen. He is an angry caged animal, and he wants OUT. Every obstacle which keeps him from this goal, from electrical panels, to steam pipes, to steel doors only serves to fuel his rage. I've seen a lot of actors play angry, but Ferrigno is downright scary. You genuinely fear for what will happen to Elaina Marks once the Hulk escapes his prison. Yet, the strangest thing happens…once he's out he immediately begins to calm down, like a child throwing a tantrum until he's out of his playpen. Then he exhibits a childlike curiosity towards Elaina, her soothing voice calming him until he reverts back to Banner.

At the end of the pilot is one of Ferrigno's best scenes of the entire series.

Following the explosion which supposedly kills Banner, (and which is later blamed on the Hulk) the Hulk carries the wounded Elaina Marks off into the nearby woods. As she lay dying in his arms, Elaina professes her love to her "Poor David". He tenderly holds her hand even though the Hulk's primitive mind doesn't understand what she is saying.

Then she quietly passes away in his arms, her hand slipping from his grasp. He clearly becomes agitated, looking helplessly back and forth in confusion, tears in his eyes as he begins panting heavily like a dog grieving over its dead master. He tries lifting and dropping her limp hand as if expecting her to respond. Then, instinctively, he seems

to realize she is gone, and lets loose a pitiful roar that echoes across the quiet valley. It is a very powerful and touching scene that shows the Hulk is much, much more than a monster.



The amount of pathos Ferrigno brings to this scene is astounding. He is able to communicate to the viewer the intense emotions of this mute character...the Hulk's confusion and inability to understand and cope with Elaina's death, through a masterful combination of facial expression and body language. I especially find the dog-like panting a fascinating and inspired touch. Whether conceived on it's own by Ferrigno or under the direction of Kenneth Johnson, it beautifully conveys the primitive, animalistic nature of the Hulk and contributes greatly to the scene. When all is said and done, the Hulk exhibits a tremendous range of emotions in the pilot, from innocent curiosity and friendliness, to rage, to tender love and extreme grief. It's a fantastically underrated performance that deserves much praise.

Family Matters

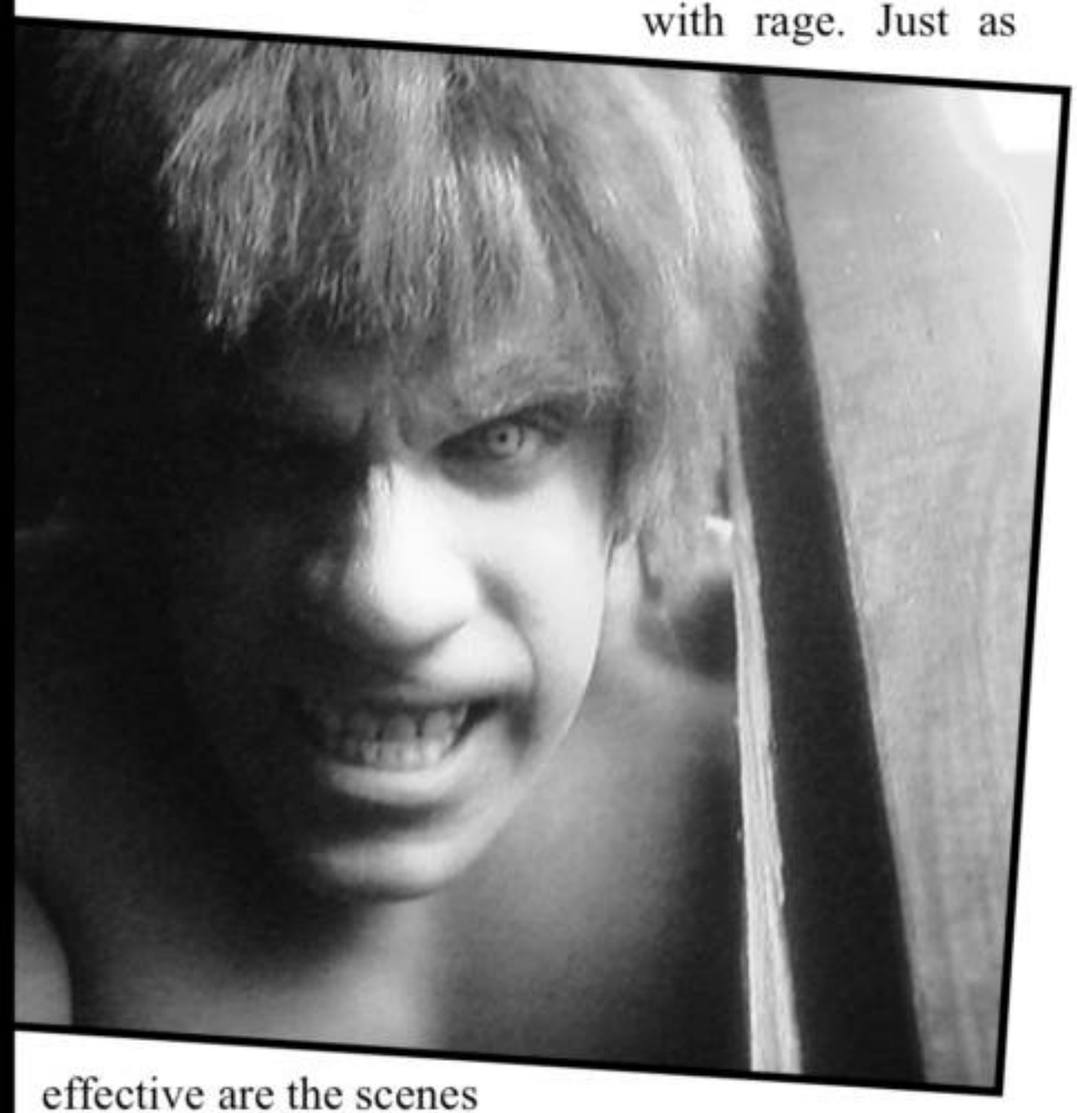
Another interesting aspect of the Hulk is how easily children and animals seem to respond to his childlike nature. Much like Frankenstein's monster, it's usually the adults who are terrified of his appearance, while most children simply see him as a new playmate. Boris Karloff spoke of similar experiences while playing Frankenstein's monster. Children seemed to instinctively recognize the character's innocence and gravitate towards him, just as they do towards the Hulk.

There are two touching scenes in the first season episode "The Beast Within" which illustrate this very phenomena. David Banner finds work at a zoo and encounters smugglers using dead animals to transport the stolen goods. The first of these scenes involves the Hulk encountering a little girl with a bag of peanuts. His curiosity towards her is fascinating to watch. She offers him some of the peanuts, which he greedily consumes, shells and all, as the girl scolds him for not eating them properly. It's a wonderful, humorous moment until the girl's mother shows up. Her hysteria frightens the Hulk away, and he is obviously just as scared of her as she is of him. The disappointed little girl says goodbye to her new friend as he runs off. Zoo officials hunt throughout the park for the Hulk into the night, where we discover him inside the tiger enclosure, gently petting a sleeping cub as it lay in his lap. Some monster indeed.

One of the best later episodes in the series is "Homecoming" where a lonely Dr. Banner, tiring of life on the run after three years, decides to return home for Thanksgiving and is reunited with his

sister and estranged father. We learn that David's mother passed away when he was just a boy, and that he blames his father for failing to get her medical attention in time and has never forgiven him. We also learn this is the primary reason David seeks out a career in medicine. During the Hulk scenes in this episode, it is clear that the creature is enraged at his father, yet cannot bring himself to harm him. This is the first time we really see the Hulk struggling against his own violent nature. He wants to lash out, but isn't sure why, or why he can't. The creature sheds tears of anger in a couple of truly touching scenes. It's another tour de force by Ferrigno, who acts as the catalyst for healing his family's deep emotional wounds. The elder Banner finally understands his son's pain and the two make amends. It's a great episode that focuses on family, forgiveness, and the consequences of unresolved anger and guilt.

Another standout episode is "Dark Side", a fantastic season four story in which David Banner attempts to suppress his animal side using an experimental serum and instead releases it unrestrained. This new Banner is downright evil, and delights in the prospect of unleashing the Hulk's fury on the unsuspecting public. This is where it gets really interesting. For Bill Bixby, it was fairly simple to play "bad" Dr. Banner vs. "good" Dr. Banner, but what about the Hulk? How do you make a character who is already enraged all the time come across as different? Much to my surprise, Ferrigno pulls it off yet again. Through subtle differences in body language, including an amazing use of his face and eyes, it's clear that this is not the usual angry Hulk. This Hulk is a killer. The eyes especially, have a vicious look never seen before, and Ferrigno's face actually trembles with rage. Just as



effective are the scenes where the Hulk's good nature resurfaces. Ferrigno does a great job playing the confused creature at war with two personalities within himself.

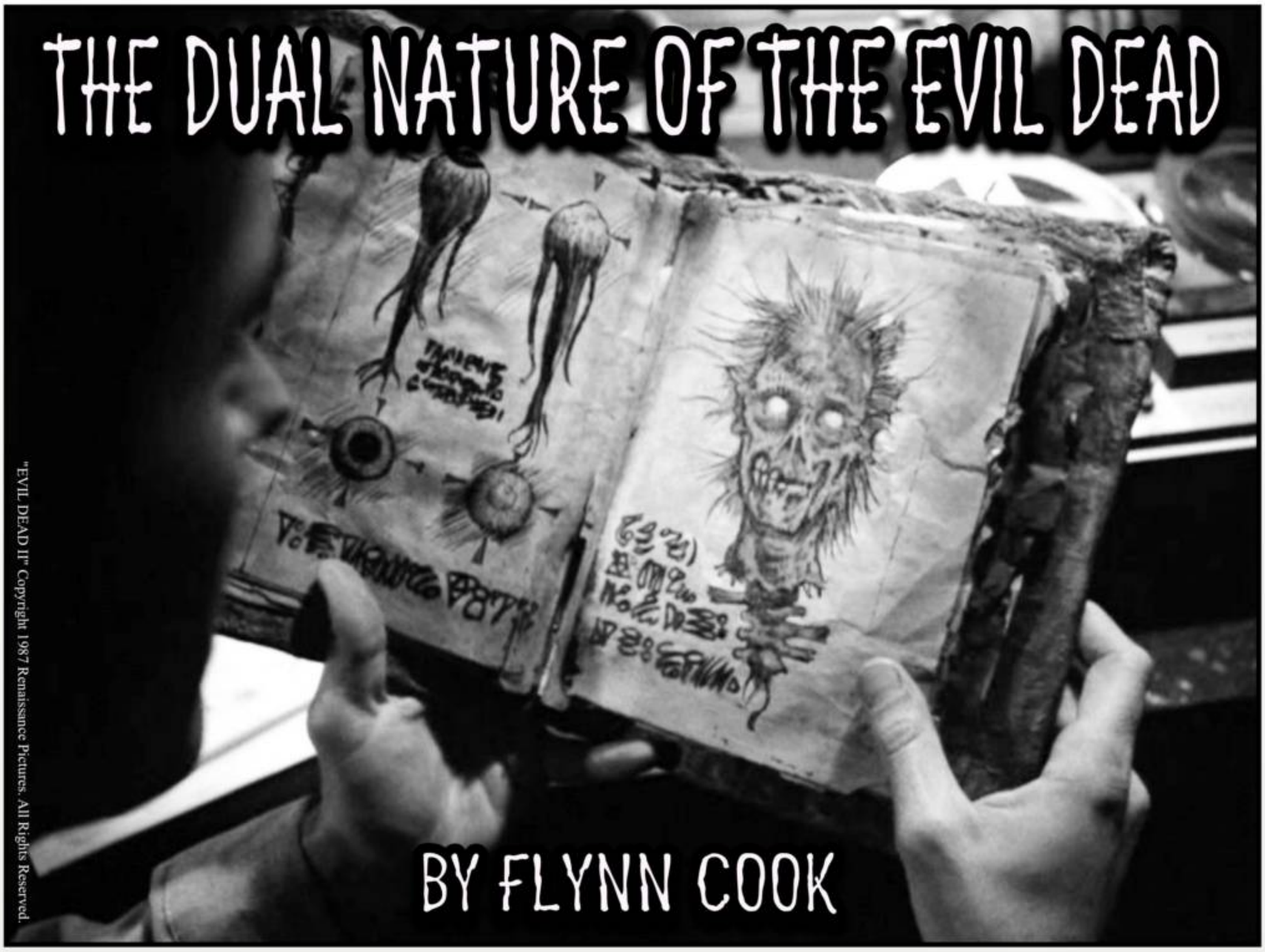
The last episode I want to examine is another great one from season four, "The Harder They Fall". In the story's opening sequence, David Banner is hit by a car while crossing the street and wakes up in the hospital a paraplegic. This is a standout episode for Bill Bixby as Banner tries to cope with both the physical and psychological impact of his injury and come to terms with the prospect of life in a wheelchair. The fantastic Hulk scene in this episode is during the first transformation. Banner and his wheelchair are accidentally thrown down a flight of stairs during a barfight, and after transforming, the Hulk finds he cannot stand. He makes several attempts to get up but keeps falling down, becoming angrier by the minute. Unable to understand why he cannot walk, he takes out his frustrations by pounding on his own legs, as if doing so will make them work. This is another really great scene that shows the Hulk's primitive intelligence and how he responds emotionally by lashing out, this time at his own body for failing him. Eventually his mutated regenerative powers allow him to stumble away.

I hope you've enjoyed this look at what I feel are some of the best moments in the *Incredible Hulk* series that truly showcase Lou Ferrigno's exceptional acting ability. There are many more, but I couldn't possibly list them all. I just wanted to shed some light on what I feel is one of the great underrated performances in television history. I urge you to take another look at the series for yourself, and when you do…look beyond the muscles, greasepaint, and fright wig. I think you'll be surprised to find a truly great and unforgettable character performance. Ferrigno's Hulk sets a standard by which all other Hulks will always be measured.

It is his legend and his legacy.

CANDARIAN DEMONOLOGY 101

THE DUAL NATURE OF THE EVIL DEAD



BY FLYNN COOK

It's hard to think of many things that can be interpreted in as many ways as film. A visual medium is truly understood through the eye of its particular beholder, and only so much dialogue and direction can affect how people receive a filmic idea. Case in point, the Evil Dead Trilogy; a series that fundamentally changes genres from one end to the other, and seems to suffer from a mixed identity.

Is it a horror series? A comedy series? Both? Should the series have changed gears, or is that what allowed it to flourish in the first place? How has the shifting tonality of the trilogy affected its spin-offs and its impending remake? Let's chain down our cellar doors and find out.

For the uninitiated: the trilogy in question is a series of films that follow a young adult male named Ash Williams through a few of the worst nights of his life. He and his friends make for a cabin in the woods for a rustic weekend getaway that turns horrific once a host of demons are summoned, resulting in much mayhem over two nights for Ash, and a further adventure back in time.

There is, perhaps, an absurdity to the original film, known only as *The Evil Dead*, but I personally find it to be a straight-up horror film, and one of the few that genuinely frightens. There is a large sector of its fanbase that consider it to be somewhat comedic already, and that's not counting how they view the two sequels! Its

intensity matched only by its ferocity, Sam Raimi's original classic may be funny to people in a roundabout way; with so much tension that builds, it's only natural that there are moments that, breaking the tension, it becomes inverted and darkly humorous. I don't believe that humorousness was intentional at the time. Though Raimi and star Bruce Campbell have admitted to being heavily inspired by the Three Stooges, I don't think that influence was deliberate in the film.

The subject matter is dark, the tone is dark, there is genuine tension, there's rape, possession and demonic encounters, to say nothing of the implications of the Necronomicon. I find my encounters with those who find it a humorous film are from those who don't see the events of the film for their true meaning or ramifications on the characters. My first time viewing the film was in the company of less horror-oriented friends (in the modern day of jaded film viewers, mind you), who laughed at some of the less than perfect performances and the low budgets. Your environment can influence your way of thinking, believe me. I didn't take the film seriously on my first go, and didn't see what the fuss was about.

Upon viewing the film again in the sanctity of isolation, it got to me. I really understood the drama of the film; I bought into it and empathized with the characters. I got carried away in the narrative and didn't notice irrelevant, superficial trappings. It's not to say that the film is only serious from a certain viewpoint, but it is to say that any film can be taken the wrong way if you don't understand it the way the filmmakers intended. And *The Evil Dead* is the best example of that. As depicted in the film, the situation Ash, Shelley, Scotty and the others find themselves in would leave no one laughing, so why should we? The tone is not poking fun at these events; we are meant to empathize with their plight. It isn't even akin to *RoboCop* with Paul Verhoven's satirical approach to violence. Verhoven was making a social/political statement using violence; thus necessitating a sense of humor. *The Evil Dead* has no such goals to shed any light onto anything except grueling terror. The low budget isn't really even apparent; taking place in the run down cabin the production filmed in was not accidental and is appropriate.

Evil Dead 2, (sometimes subtitled "Dead By Dawn") begins with a shortened recap of the first film (due to an inability to secure footage from it), which strips the story down to just Ash and his girlfriend Linda this time, and starting from the matching shot of Ash being attacked by an unseen 'force,' the film picks up where the original left off. *2* clearly has a deliberate sense of humor this time, outside of Sam Raimi's usual goofy use of tension.

But there are still many scares to be had. Ash's

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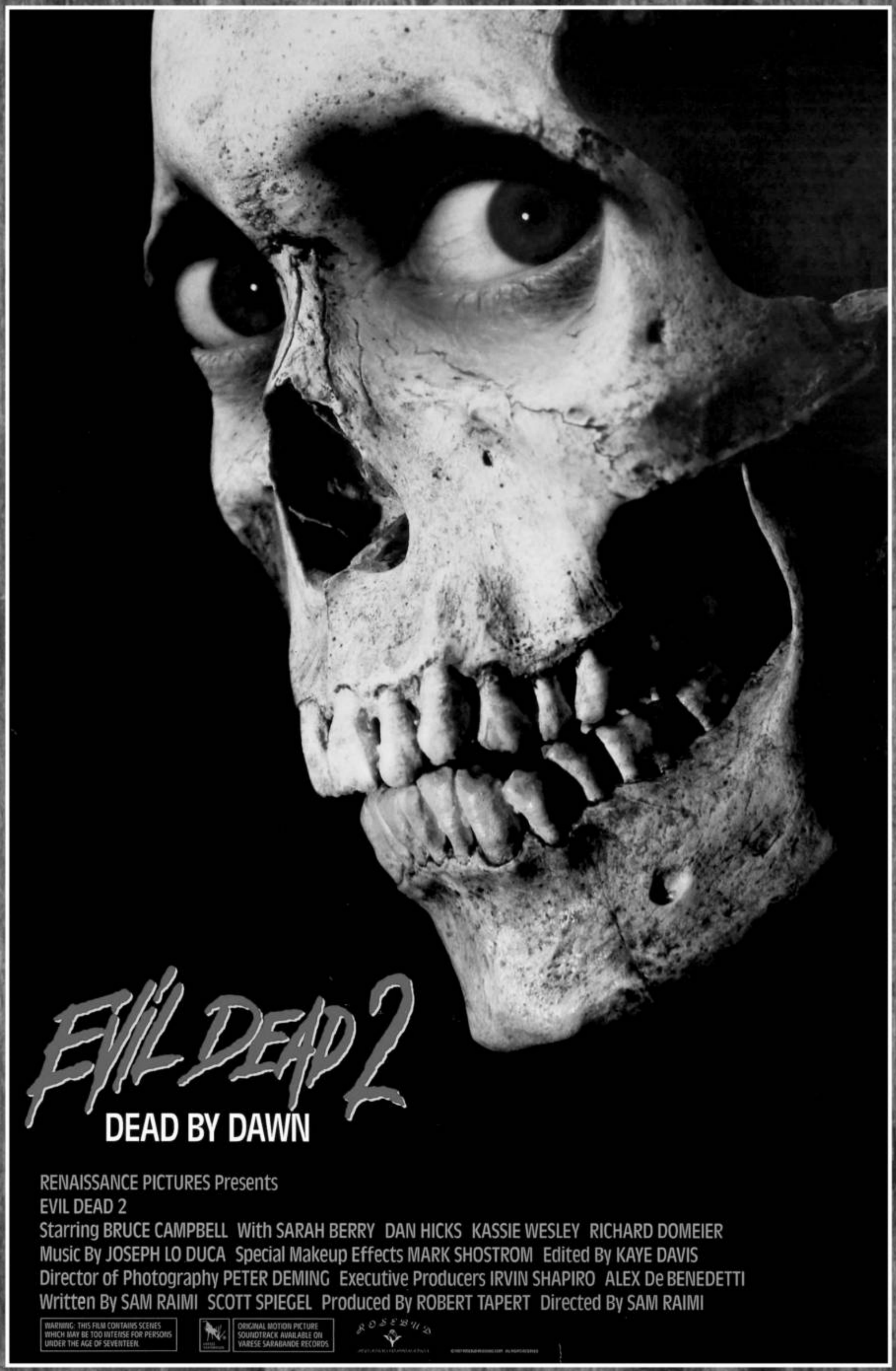
"...The most ferociously original horror film of the year..."
— Stephen King
author of Carrie and The Shining
THE EVIL DEAD
Starring BRUCE CAMPBELL ELLEN SANDWEISS HAL DELRICH BETSY BAKER SARAH YORK
Make-up Effects by TOM SULLIVAN Photographic Effects by BART PIERCE Photography by TIM PHILO
Music by JOE LoDUCA Produced by ROBERT G. TAPERT Written and Directed by SAM RAIMI
Color by TECHNICOLOR® Renaissance Pictures Ltd. From NEW LINE CINEMA All Rights Reserved
THE PRODUCERS RECOMMEND THAT NO ONE UNDER 17 BE ALLOWED TO SEE THE EVIL DEAD
©New Line Cinema Corp. MCMLXXXII

moments alone during his second night in the cabin have an element of humor to them, even though you're seeing him go insane. It is truly one of those elements that's shockingly different compared to the first film; even the scary moments are tweaked to have a comedic slant to them. A new cast of characters arrive at the cabin and get caught up in the horror along with Ash, and they too have a rough go of it.

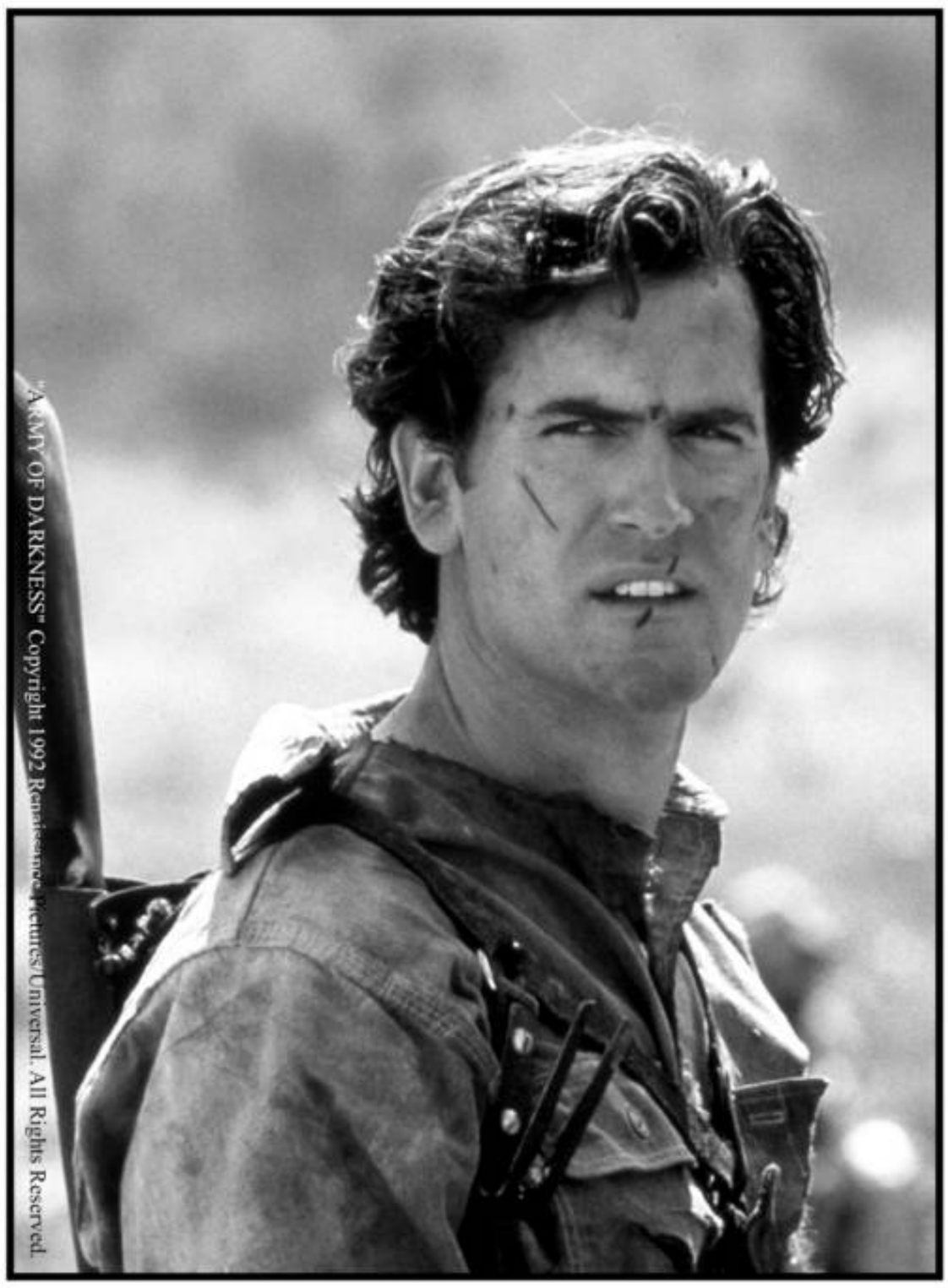
One may argue that there would naturally be a lightening-up of the proceedings considering the fact that Ash goes from being a scared victim to an active entity working against the evil of the Necronomicon. While true, I think it's a lamentable trade off to lose that grueling terror for laughs. Still, *Evil Dead 2* strikes a fair balance between the dark implications and the humorous portrayal of horror.


EVIL DEAD 2
DEAD BY DAWN
RENAISSANCE PICTURES Presents
EVIL DEAD 2
Starring BRUCE CAMPBELL With SARAH BERRY DAN HICKS KASSIE WESLEY RICHARD DOMEIER
Music By JOSEPH LO DUCA Special Makeup Effects MARK SHOSTROM Edited By KAYE DAVIS
Director of Photography PETER DEMING Executive Producers IRVIN SHAPIRO ALEX De BENEDETTI
Written By SAM RAIMI SCOTT SPIEGEL Produced By ROBERT TAPERT Directed By SAM RAIMI
WARNING: THIS FILM CONTAINS SCENES WHICH MAY BE TOO INTENSE FOR PERSONS UNDER THE AGE OF SEVENTEEN.
ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK AVAILABLE ON VARESE SARABANDE RECORDS

However, the third entry, 1991's *Army of Darkness* finds us in almost entirely different territory.

Army of Darkness is the film that a large majority of people were introduced to the trilogy through. Considering the first two installments were largely unknown to the public-at-large (and owned by different companies), Universal Pictures decided that its name shouldn't have any relation to the previous entries in the series, and indeed, any Universal-brand home video release seems to omit any mention of this being a third installment in a franchise.

I think this being the most well-known entry in the series has affected how people view it as a whole. *Army of Darkness* had ideas that, in the second film, might have been played for horror. Instead, the entire film is played for slapstick comedy and farcical heroism. It has defined Bruce Campbell as an actor in the public's eye far more than either of the first two installments, relegating him to "sarcastic mock hero" roles for years. This is a shame because I find him to be a highly underrated actor on the whole.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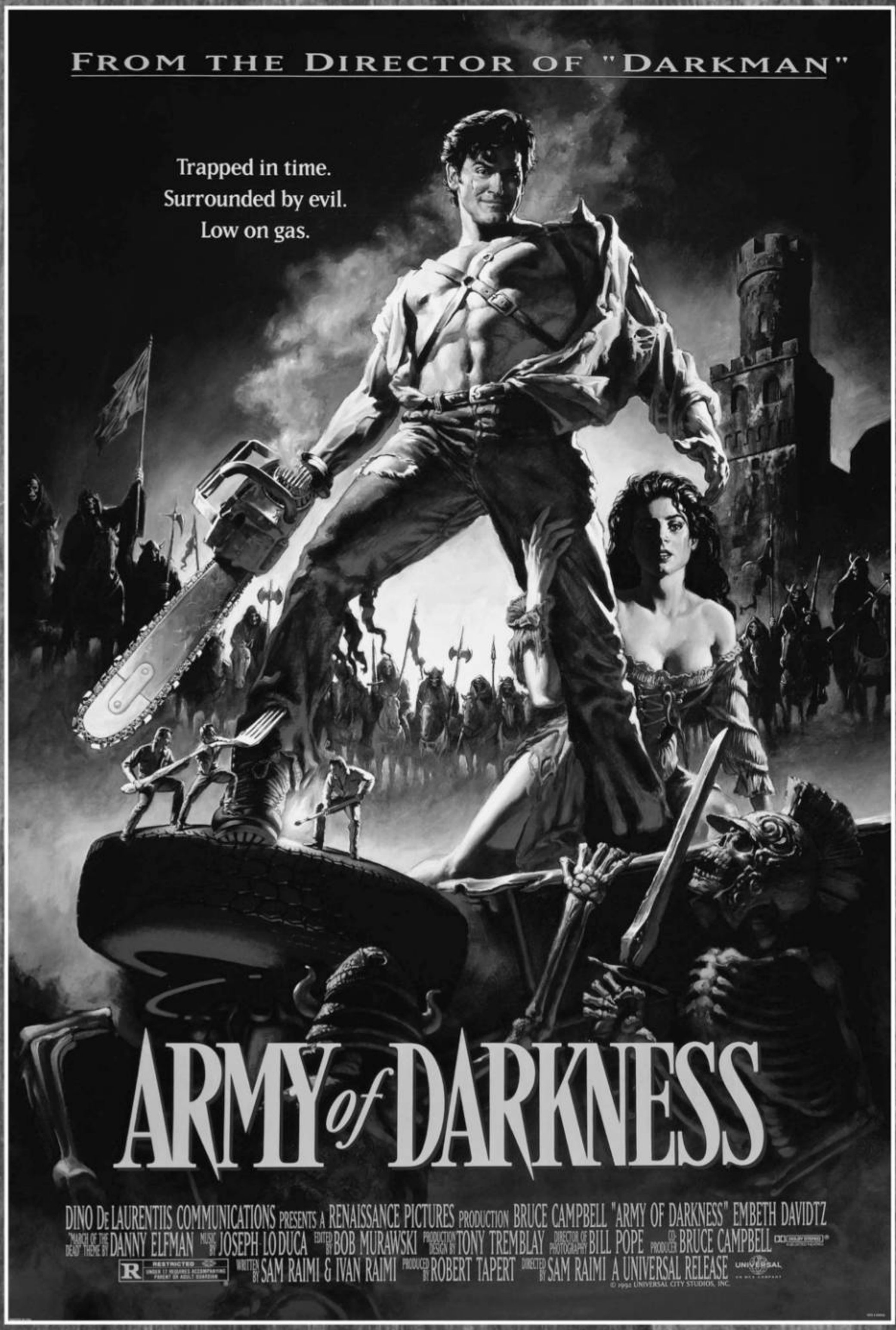
FROM THE DIRECTOR OF "DARKMAN"
Trapped in time.
Surrounded by evil.
Low on gas.
ARMY of DARKNESS
DINO DE LAURENTIIS COMMUNICATIONS PRESENTS A RENAISSANCE PICTURES PRODUCTION BRUCE CAMPBELL "ARMY OF DARKNESS" EMBETH DAVIDTZ
"MARCH OF THE DEAD" THEME BY DANNY ELFMAN MUSIC BY JOSEPH LODUCA EDITED BY BOB MURAWSKI PRODUCTION DESIGN BY TONY TREMBLAY DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY BILL POPE CO-PRODUCER BRUCE CAMPBELL
R RESTRICTED UNDER 17 REQUIRES ACCOMPANYING PARENT OR ADULT GUARDIAN
WRITTEN BY SAM RAIMI & IVAN RAIMI PRODUCED BY ROBERT TAPERT DIRECTED BY SAM RAIMI A UNIVERSAL RELEASE
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The comic book sequels to *Army of Darkness* (titled similarly) continue that humorous tonality. Publisher Dynamite has capitalized on the cult/nerd phenomenon of the underground success of said film and had produced a couple of ongoing books along with several mini-series.

Ironically, the products bearing the original film's title share a different tonality.

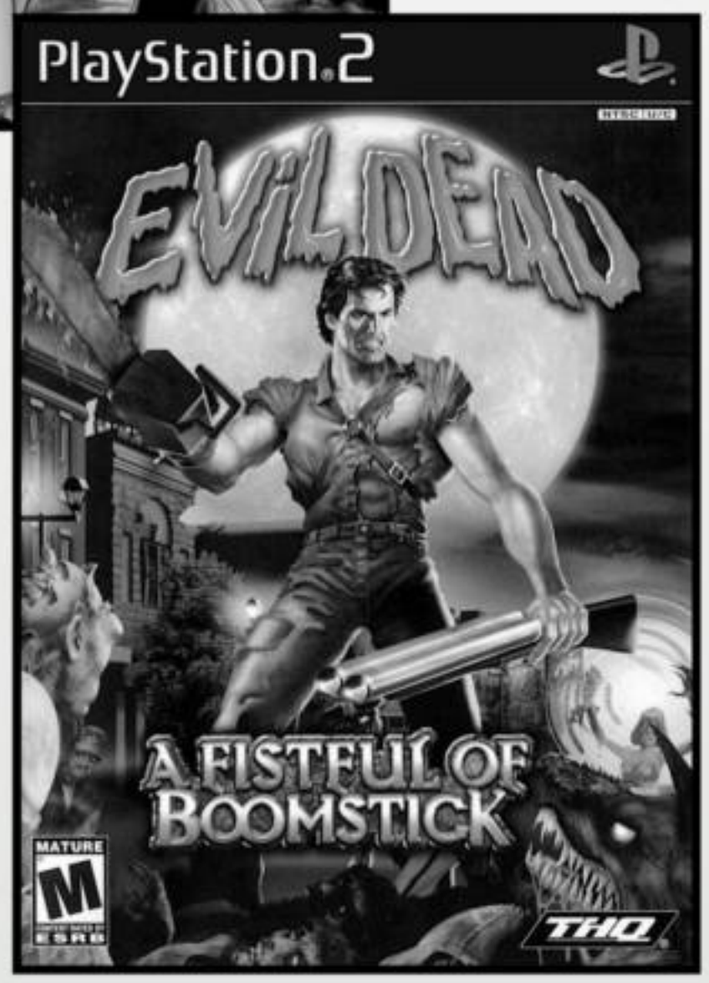
Available for the Sega Dreamcast, Sony Playstation and PC, *Evil Dead: Hail to the King* has some of the trademark Ash quips, but is generally a survival-horror game, playing not unlike *Resident Evil*, and with just as screwed-up controls. The game finds Ash years after *Army of Darkness*, haunted now by the things he had seen and done, with a new girlfriend. In a hackneyed idea to get things moving, he ventures back to the cabin with his new girl to prove to himself that it's all over. Once he arrives, though, his old, disembodied hand appears and re-activates Professor Knowby's tape, re-releasing The Evil Dead. Ash's girlfriend is taken, and he must go back into action.

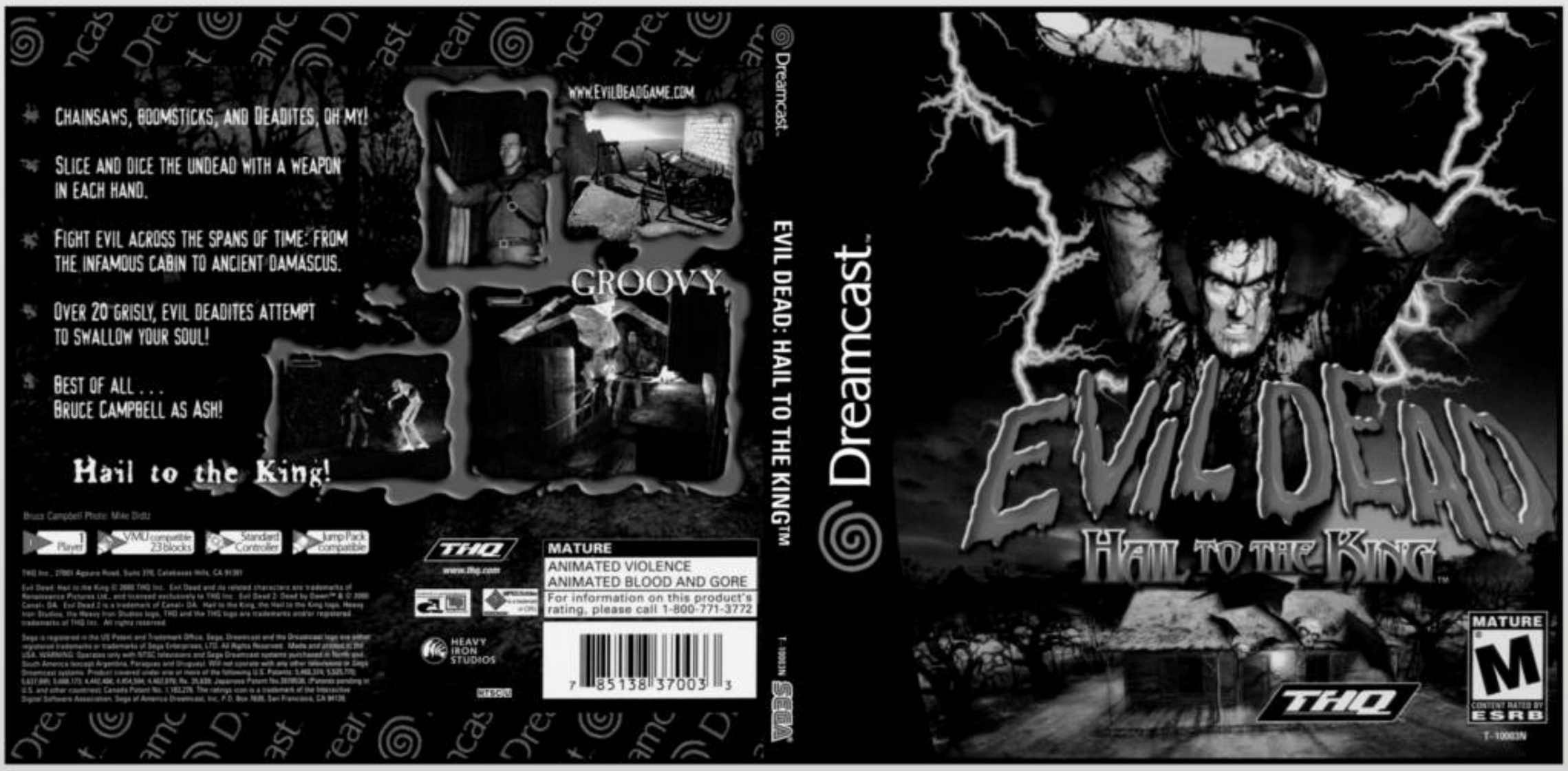
The game takes place in the cabin and the forest around it. Taking you to all manner of creepy spots and against many interesting creatures, the game takes advantage of the vicerality of being interactive, and decides to be more scary than funny, something that would do the original movie proud.

With stiff camera angles and even stiffer controls, the game is not for the uncommitted of gamers. Any Evil Dead fan worth their salt has to tolerate a lot to play it, but I find its tone to be rewarding enough to compensate. It's basically the *Evil Dead 4* we'll never receive.

Happily, there was another game, a sequel to *Hail to the King*, effectively; *Evil Dead 5*. Available for Sony Playstation 2 and Microsoft's Xbox, *Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick* finds Ash after the events of *Hail to the King* as a burnout in his home of Dearborn, MI. A local show about supernatural phenomena has acquired Professor Knowby's tape and Necronomicon pages and, believing it harmless, the guests accidentally unleash it all over again. Ash just can't catch a break!

A different beast than its predecessor, *A Fistful of Boomstick* is a third-person action game with no survival-horror elements. The camera is player-controlled now, which is a relief. The controls are much repaired from *Hail to the King*, and graphics obviously improved. The game is very clever for its use of the narrative to shape the gameplay. Effectively, it's *Back to the Future Part II* meets *The Evil Dead*. Ash has to travel back and forth through time to different versions of Dearborn to fight the Evil Dead. Even upon returning to





the present at a point in the game, Dearborn is a radically different version of itself.

The game boasts plenty of quips and action, but also, owing to the opportunities of interactivity, the game does have an eerie, spooky vibe. It doesn't reach the scare levels of a *Silent Hill* or a *Resident Evil*, but it's appropriate for the franchise.

One final video game graced us; *Evil Dead: Regeneration*. Interestingly, instead of another sequel, this game is a what-if! The Playstation 2, Xbox and PC game takes place in an alternate timeline in which Ash does not get sucked back in time at the end of *Evil Dead II*, rather, he's put on trial for the murders he

(apparently) committed that night at the cabin, and is declared legally insane. His crooked, evil psychiatrist utilizes the Necronomicon material (of course) and re-unleashes the Candarian demons. Ash has to escape with the help of a half-Deadite midget named Sam (voiced by Ted Raimi, brother of Sam), and save the girl and stop the crooked doctor.

Gameplay is similar to *A Fistful of Boomstick* though improved. The game is much more action orientated, with a sense of speed to the proceedings; a fast paced game of chainsaw hacking and shotgun blasting. More humorous than the previous two games, in a way, it's the *Army of Darkness* of the game trilogy. But an eerie vibe is hard to wipe away.

The best element of this trio of games is the fact that Bruce Campbell returns to voice Ash in all three of them. Hey, if Sam Raimi won't give us another film sequel, these games will have to do!

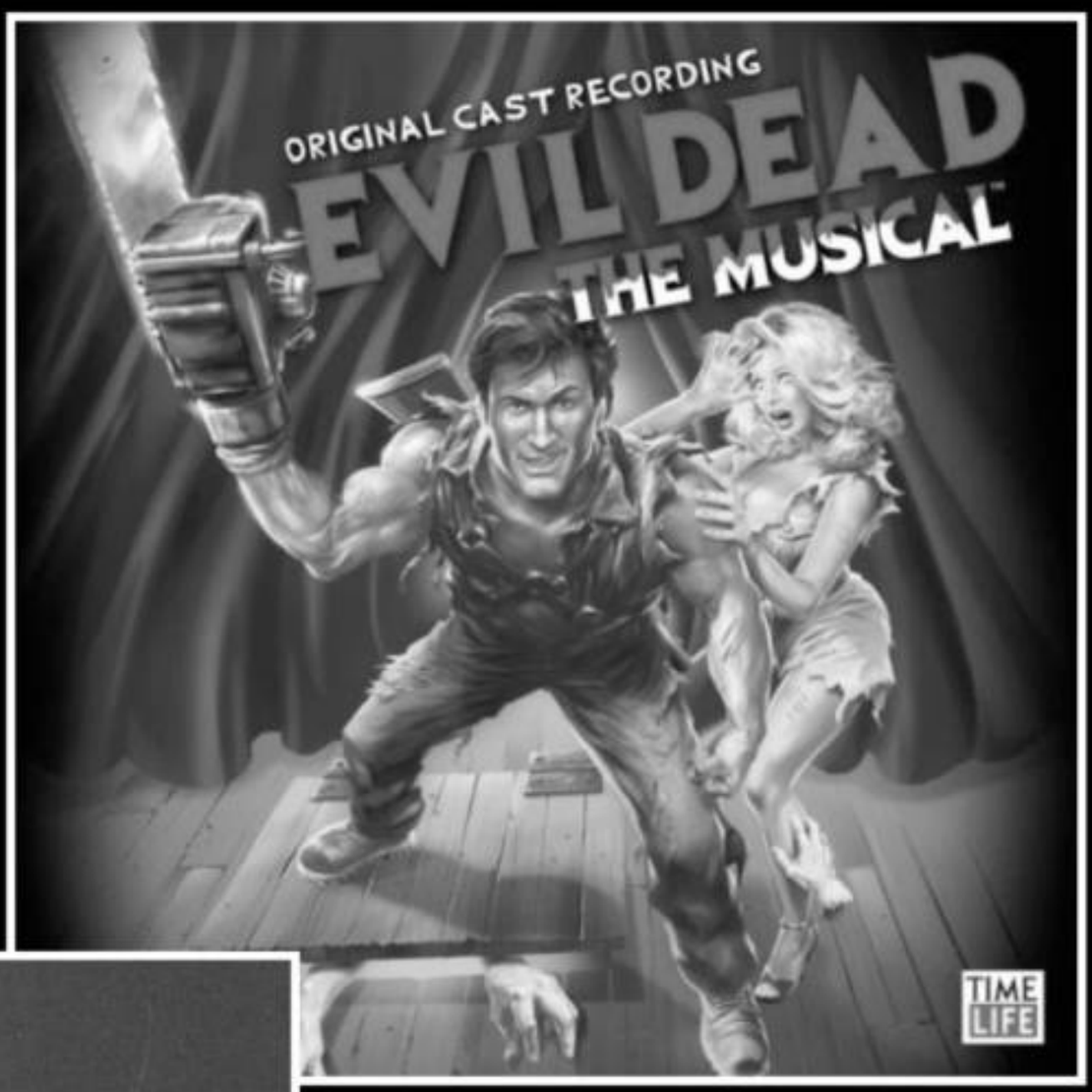
This leads to my final, brief segment: The *Evil Dead* remake.

Produced by Sam Raimi and Bruce Campbell themselves, I'm sure there's probably more to the film than the trailer lets on, but I cannot help but be disappointed. And don't get me wrong; I'm not like everyone else who cries foul at remakes. I rather enjoy them unless they are genuinely bad films. Most people

just throw them under the bus for the simple fact of being a remake of something they loved from their childhoods. The "Ash" equivalent of the film is a woman, which I was pleased and intrigued about. It would be straight-up horror. Another plus for me.

But then, the trailer was released. What happened? A bunch of bland, forgettable teenagers doing deliberate, torture-porn style dismemberments to disturb young audiences (a Deadite cutting its tongue on a blade, for instance), and not to mention the Deadites crawl across the floor with their hair down like, oh, I don't know, the creature from *The Ring*.

I'm not unreasonable. Ad campaigns can be notoriously wrong, so I will be there with ticket-in-hand. But does it look good? Not really. And for me, of all people to say that, that means something. I believe my articles for this magazine have shown me to be someone who thinks outside of the box. When I'm thinking like everyone else? That's not a good harbinger! Hey, it's at least got to be better than that lamentable Evil Dead Musical!



Concluding: the Evil Dead franchise has evolved much since its conception. Going from two extreme ends of the spectrum: from horror to comedy. As time goes on and more people discover the grueling terror of this series, no matter how they got into it or why, I can only say enthusiastically: *JOIN US!*

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CELL
THE PERFECT MONSTER

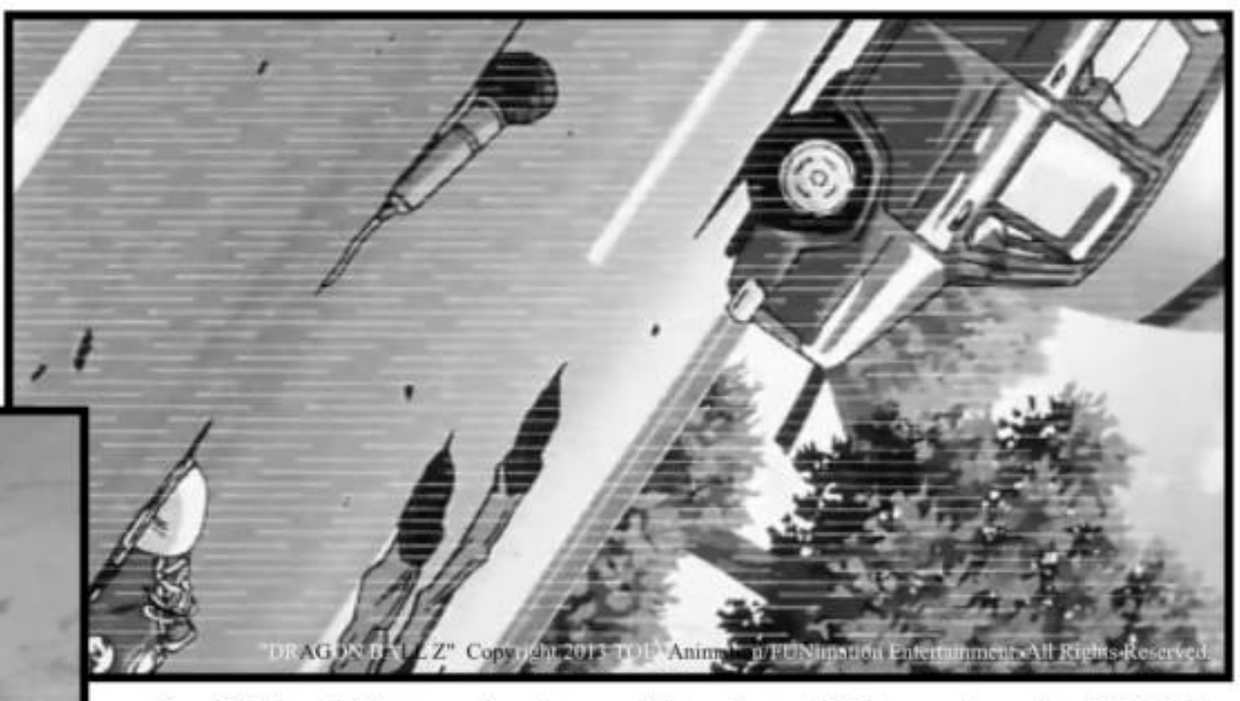
BY DEREK PADULA

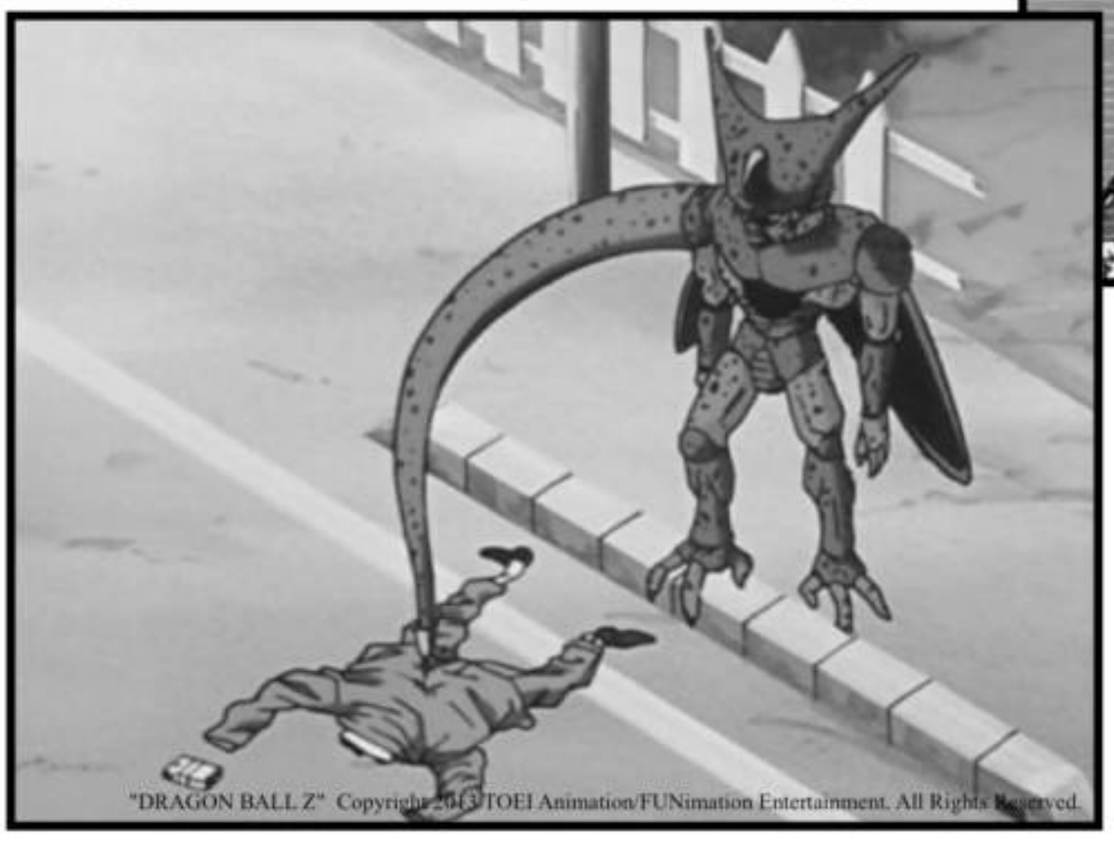
Cell in his 'imperfect' form.

Discarded clothes lie on the pavement. Uneaten ice cream melts in the afternoon heat. Wind passes through the windows of empty rooms. This is the end of Ginger Town; one more in a line of victims for Cell.

What is Cell? An artificial human created by the genius scientist and roboticist, Dr. Gero. Cell is Dr. Gero's master work and consists of spliced DNA samples from all of the galaxies' mightiest warriors. Cell's singular drive is to absorb the necessary life forms and bioenergy needed to attain its ultimate, perfect genetic state. To do this, Cell sneaks from town to town, absorbing people and consuming their life energy to strengthen its own power – leaving thousands dead.

Sound like the plot of a classic Hollywood horror film or a B-movie? It's actually a sub plot of *Dragon Ball*, an otherwise lighthearted and comical action adventure manga and anime from Japan. The series began in 1984 and experienced huge success in Japan, Western Europe and once again in the United States in the mid to late 90's and early 2000's. *Dragon Ball* tells the story of Son Goku, a super strong young man who searches the world for the mystical dragon balls with the simple wish to become ever stronger. As a member of the warrior Saiyan race, he loves to fight, and along his journey he faces a variety of opponents, including other martial artists, despotic tyrants, and genetic monsters like Cell.





The author of *Dragon Ball*, Akira Toriyama, is well known for his sense of humor and silliness, and his comic was heavily influenced by traditional Chinese and

Japanese culture, including fairytales and legends. But in the middle of *Dragon Ball* the mood of his comic took a noticeable shift into action oriented, science fiction, inspired territory. Cell marks the moment where sci-fi and monster movie bad guys combine with high technology futurism, and for the next few volumes the reader is treated to a surprisingly different story telling.

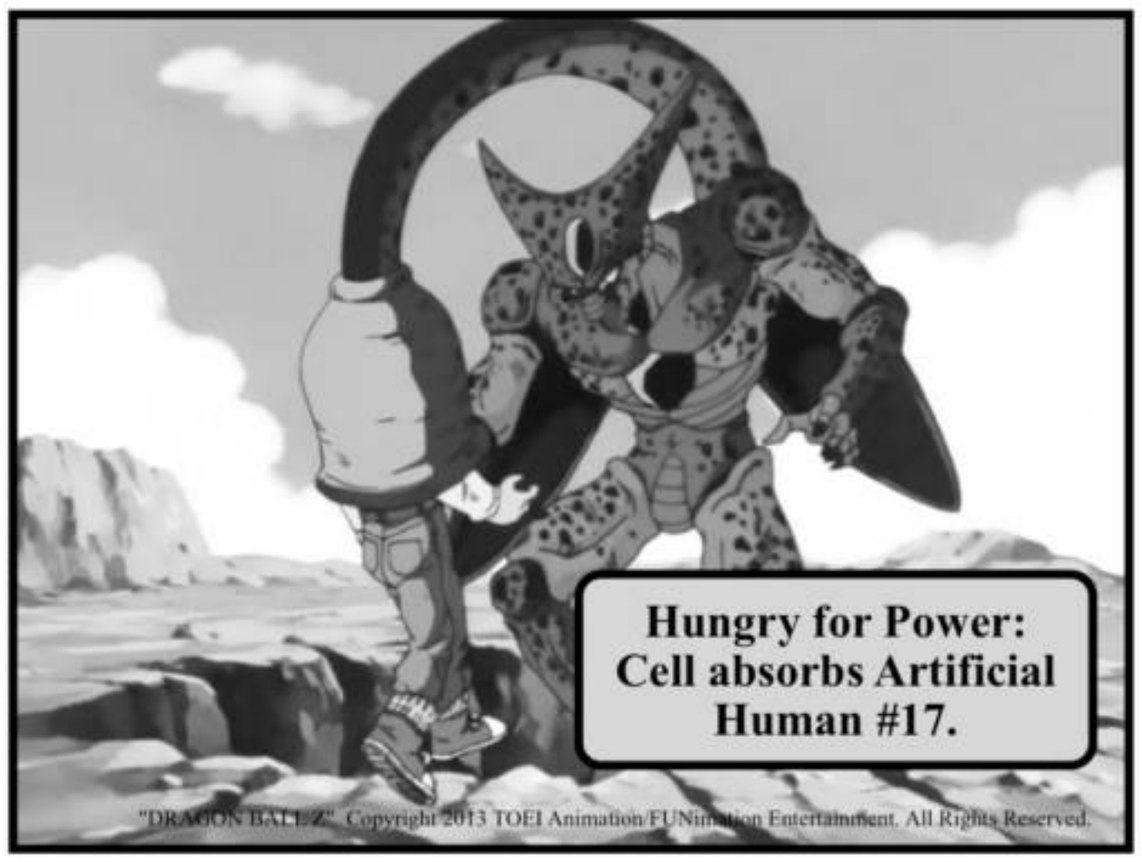
Where did this shift come from?

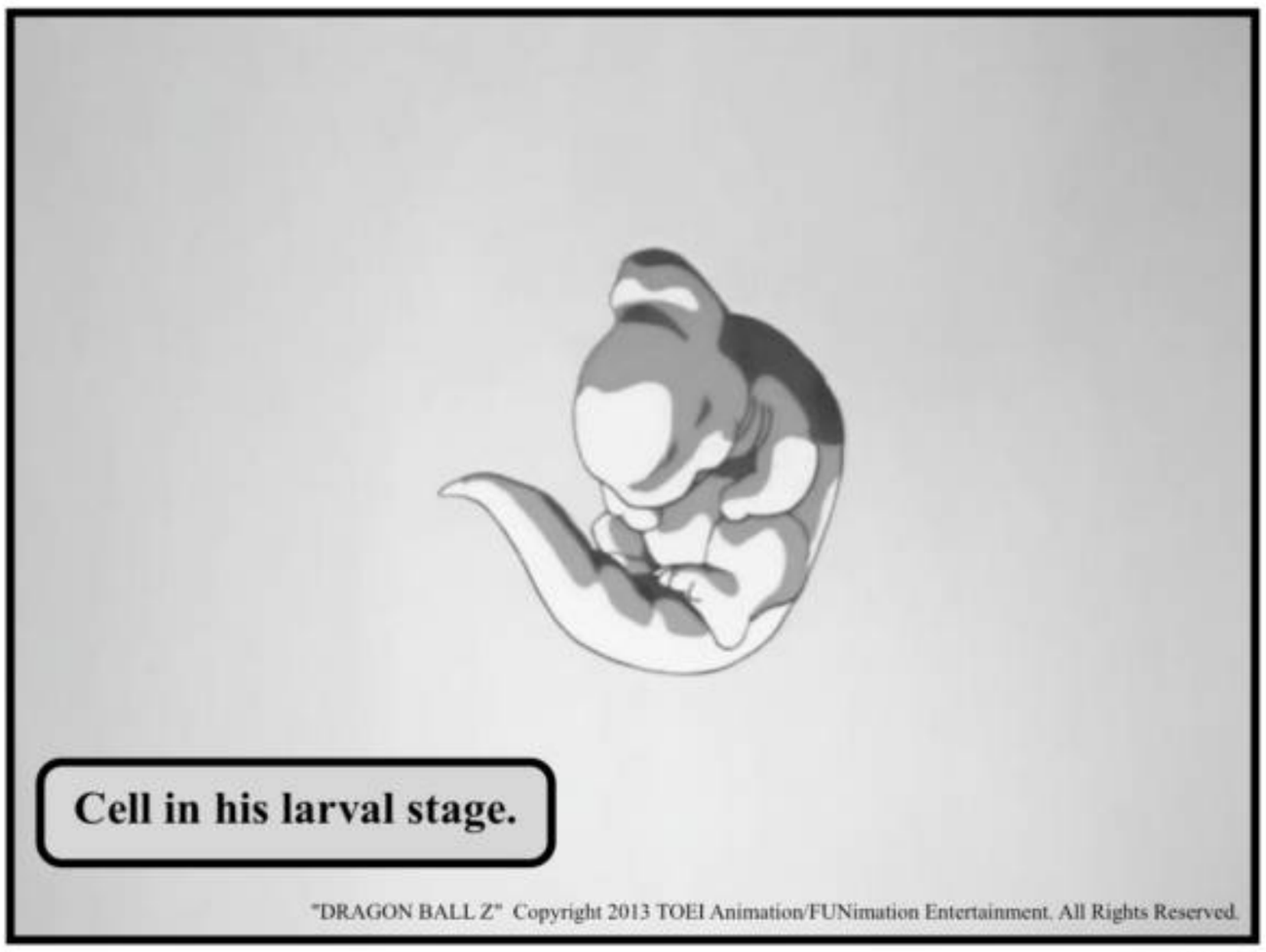
Inspired by Blade Runner

Akira Toriyama was born and raised in Japan but was heavily influenced by foreign cinema, including Hong Kong based Jackie Chan films and Hollywood action blockbusters. This includes the 1982 classic, *Blade Runner*, by Ridley Scott.

The plot of *Blade Runner* centers on replicants, bioengineered beings that look exactly like humans. Created by the scientists at the Tyrell Corporation, replicants are stronger, faster, and in some cases more intelligent than regular humans. Likewise in *Dragon Ball*, Toriyama has Dr. Gero create a pair of replicant-like beings called Artificial Human #17 and Artificial Human #18 (Androids in the English dub of the anime). In the film, replicants are hunted down and "retired" by special investigators (Blade Runners) such as the protagonist, Deckard. Likewise in *Dragon Ball*, Cell is the final Artificial Human, #21, and it is programmed with the purpose of hunting down and assimilating #17 and #18 into its body to attain perfection. They run from Cell and Cell pursues until finally capturing and absorbing them.

Furthermore, since Cell is built from the DNA of other creatures inside a laboratory, it is engineered to be the ultimate life form. It has super strength, incredible speed, a near invincible





body, can breathe in outer space, survive extreme conditions with no need to eat, and has high intelligence. Cell can also regenerate lost body parts and reform its entire body through cellular reconstruction as long as even a single cell remains. As Artificial Human #17 once said, "We androids will always be superior to your kind."

To Be Human

Through their actions both *Blade Runner* and *Dragon Ball Z* pose the question, 'What does it mean to be human?' By creating such realistic replicants and Artificial Humans, Ridley Scott and Akira Toriyama equally blur the line between what's 'real' and what isn't and cause us to ponder on our own lives and the lives of all other sentient beings. Are we simply a materialist collection of organic parts, driven completely by our genetics? If so, do we cease to be human if our organic parts are replaced? Or is there something more to our humanity than the physical?

Toriyama appears to answer the question by showing that Artificial Humans, whether completely organic, completely robotic, or somewhere in-between, are still inherently human where it counts, in that they are sentient beings capable of the same desires, emotions and suffering that we feel. For example, in episode 129 of the *Dragon Ball Z* anime, the character Vegeta fights against the completely robotic Artificial Human #19 and says, "Let me ask you, does a machine like yourself ever experience fear?!" Vegeta transforms into a higher energy state and then brutally defeats #19, killing him from behind as he runs away in fear. Similarly, the semi-robotic #17 and #18 also experience fear in the face of impending assimilation into Cell. Since fear is a base response of self-preservation and an indicator of sentience, if the Artificial Humans have fear and want to stay alive, then it seems they are much more than simple machines or organisms following their programming.

Despite being a cold, calculating scientist, Dr. Gero also fears old age and goes so far as to transform himself into an Artificial Human, transplanting his brain into a robotic body to attain immortality as #20. As Dr. Gero explains in the anime continuation of the series called *Dragon Ball GT*, he willingly ends his humanity to the maximum extent so he can become an Artificial Human and enact his plan to replace all of humanity with superior beings.

Inside and Outside

The majority of Dr. Gero's creations have a fixed design and appear generally humanoid or even indistinguishable from other people, but Cell is the complete opposite.

Toriyama's design for Cell is a skillful balance of insect, reptile and humanoid. Daizaburo Okumoto, a critic of French literature, wrote about Cell's design in a 1995 essay titled *Mechanisms, Beasts, and Reptiles*, saying "From the texture of the mighty Cell's skin to his facial expressions, everything about him gives the reader the immediate impression that he is a reptile. Yet on his

back he has the sheathed wings of a beetle. And he undergoes insect-like metamorphoses, shedding his skin after hatching from an egg, and attaining his final form after absorbing Artificial Humans #17 and #18."

Daizaburo continues discussing his perfect final form, "But then again, Cell shows human characteristics as well. He walks standing up and his posture and actions are those of a human. In other words, within the awesome presence of Cell lies a skillful biotechnological synthesis, or rather a harmonization, of reptile, insect, and human."

Transformations of Terror: Cell's cocoon.

perfect, compelled by genetics and emotions to evolve.

If Cell is designed to be perfect, then why begin as an animal? This can be interpreted as representative of the transformation every man goes through, either physically as a beast walking on all fours to the evolution toward an upright stance, or metaphorically from lesser needs to higher purpose.

Alongside the ramification and potential dangers of genetic modification, gene splicing, and supposed genetic perfection (material issues), there are higher concept issues of worldview and perfection.

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The Path to Perfection:
Cell in his 2nd transformation (left) and 'perfect' form (right).

Of Monsters and Men

Cell sends the world into a panic by its attempts to grow energy via human consumption and to track down #17 and #18. The world's army attack Cell on foot, in tanks, and by air, and are wiped out with a wave of the hand. Meanwhile the poor are left to fend for themselves while the rich hole up in futile bunkers. No one can stop Cell. Except the heroes, of course.

And how do the heroes attempt to stop Cell? With the same violence that Cell used against them. They fight tooth and nail, fist to fist, to obliterate Cell's body at the sub-cellular level so he can no longer regenerate. There is a difference in worldview though. Son Goku, his son, Son Gohan, and most of his allies attack Cell with an altruistic mentality of defending the

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It's this synthesis by Toriyama that makes Cell such a compelling monster, for within this product of a test tube lies the potential for a beast-like yet still human trait. A thirst that can only be satiated by completing the task that is genetically programmed within every living cell of its body: To reach its full limitations and become

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planet and humanity against the threat Cell poses. Vegeta is the exception as he fights for his own pride and ego. His motivation isn't that altogether different from Cell's. Vegeta once said, "There's only one certainty in life. A strong man stands above and conquers all!" What's fascinating is that with this mentality Vegeta isn't able to defeat Cell. And neither is Son Goku. Who does? Son Gohan, the young, kind boy who dislikes fighting but does so because there's a part of his nature (whether

genetic or learned) that pushes him to rise up to any challenge faced.

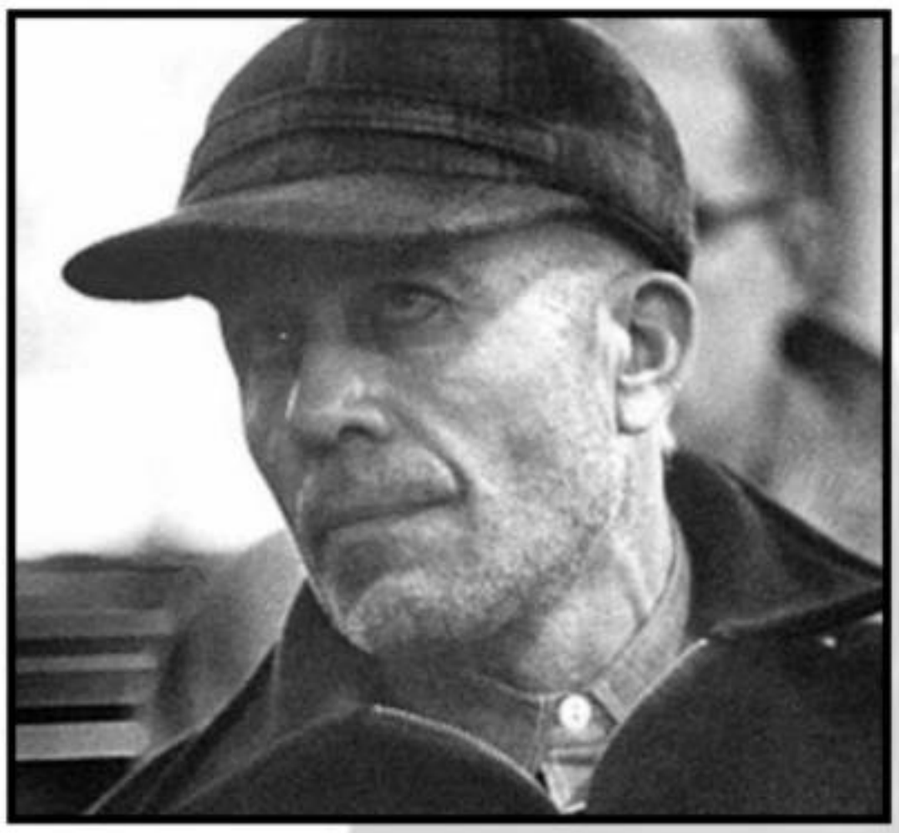
Unfortunately war has a way of making monsters of men. Nietzsche said, "He who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby become a monster." When we use the same methods to defeat our enemies that they use to defeat us, we risk becoming like them. Fighting fire with fire begets an endless cycle of violence and personal transformation in response.

Cell really was the perfect monster, designed to be perfect from the outset and completely dedicated to its programmed mission. No one in the world could defeat such a monster, and so in order to succeed the heroes had to become their own monsters, transforming into a rage filled state of hatred and violence. It was only when Son Gohan let go of his kindness and stopped caring about the planet and other people that he replaced his patience with hatred and ascended to the next level of power. Only by becoming an even bigger monster could he win the battle.

At which point do the monsters become human, and the human's become monsters? It seems to be an issue of worldviews. Son Gohan had to become more like Cell in order to defeat Cell, just as Deckard had to become more like the replicants in order to defeat the replicants. Ridley Scott has even implied that Deckard himself was an advanced model replicant, hunting other replicants, further blurring the line between human and supposed monsters.

Akira Toriyama is most well-known for his lighthearted action adventure and gag comics, but now it's clear there's another side to Toriyama's writing. A monstrous side. If replicants, Cell, and the other Artificial Human's are any indicator, then perhaps those monsters aren't much different from ourselves.

More of Derek Padula's insightful analysis on Dragon Ball *can be found in his books,* The Dao of Dragon Ball *and* "It's Over 9,000!" When Worldviews Collide. *Shadowland readers can visit his website at:*
http://thedaoofdragonball.com/



ED GEIN: THE FACE OF HORROR

BY JOSEPH RUBAS

The man to have the most profound impact on the horror genre as we know it wasn't Stephen King, H.P. Lovecraft, or even Edgar Allen Poe; it was Ed Gein, a Midwestern farmer/serial killer...

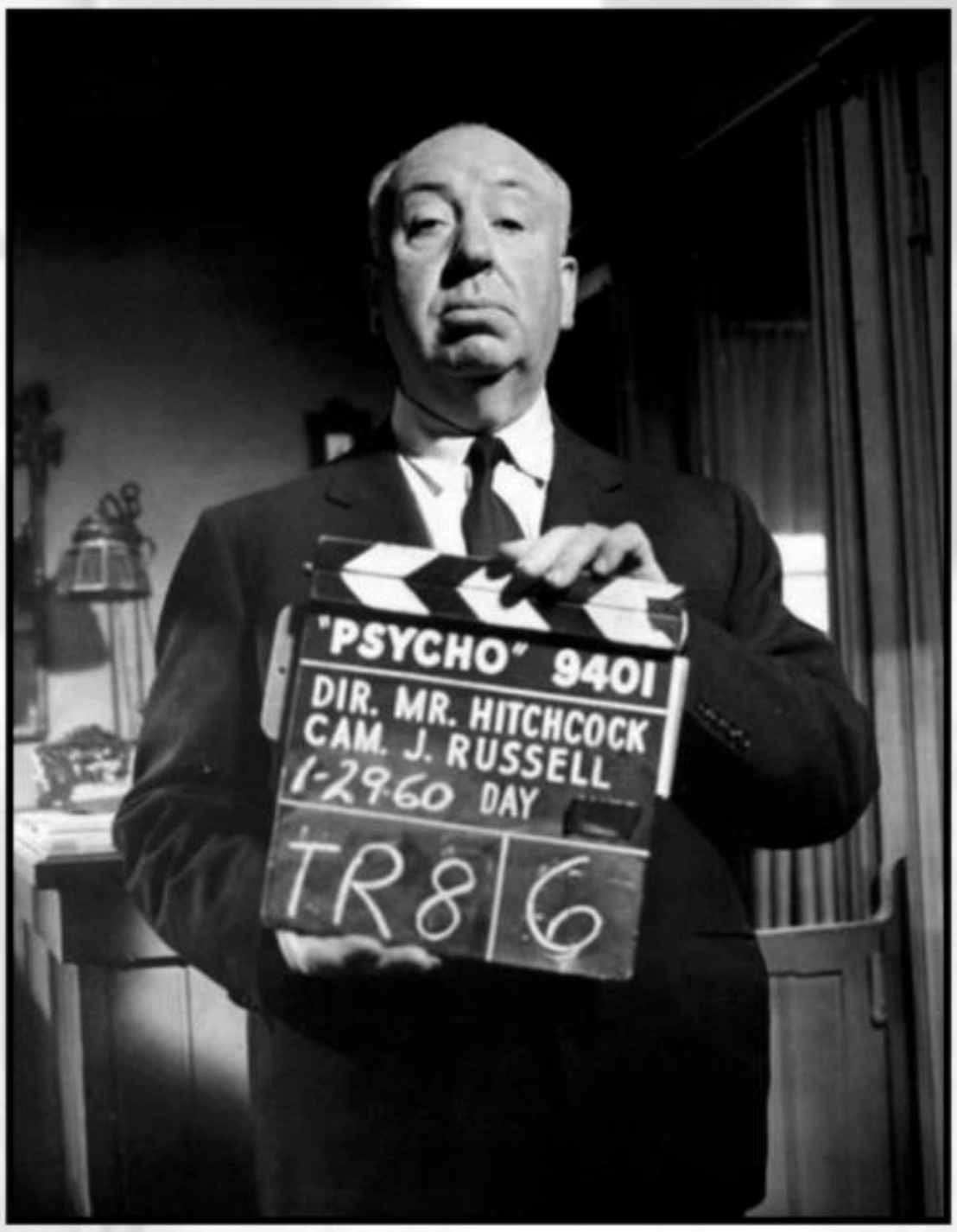
I. The Movies

In 1960, British director Alfred Hitchcock terrified audiences with *Psycho*, the story of a man, his mother, and a rundown motel where pretty young girls (and nosey private eyes) disappear with alarming regularity. A stroke of cinematic brilliance, *Psycho* made 15 million dollars at the box office and was nominated for four Academy Awards. Considered one of the greatest movies ever made, it caused a controversy upon its release for a number of reasons, one being its "graphic" (for 1960) depiction of sex and violence; a woman is briefly seen in a bra, and two people are brutally murdered onscreen, their deaths in full view of the audience.

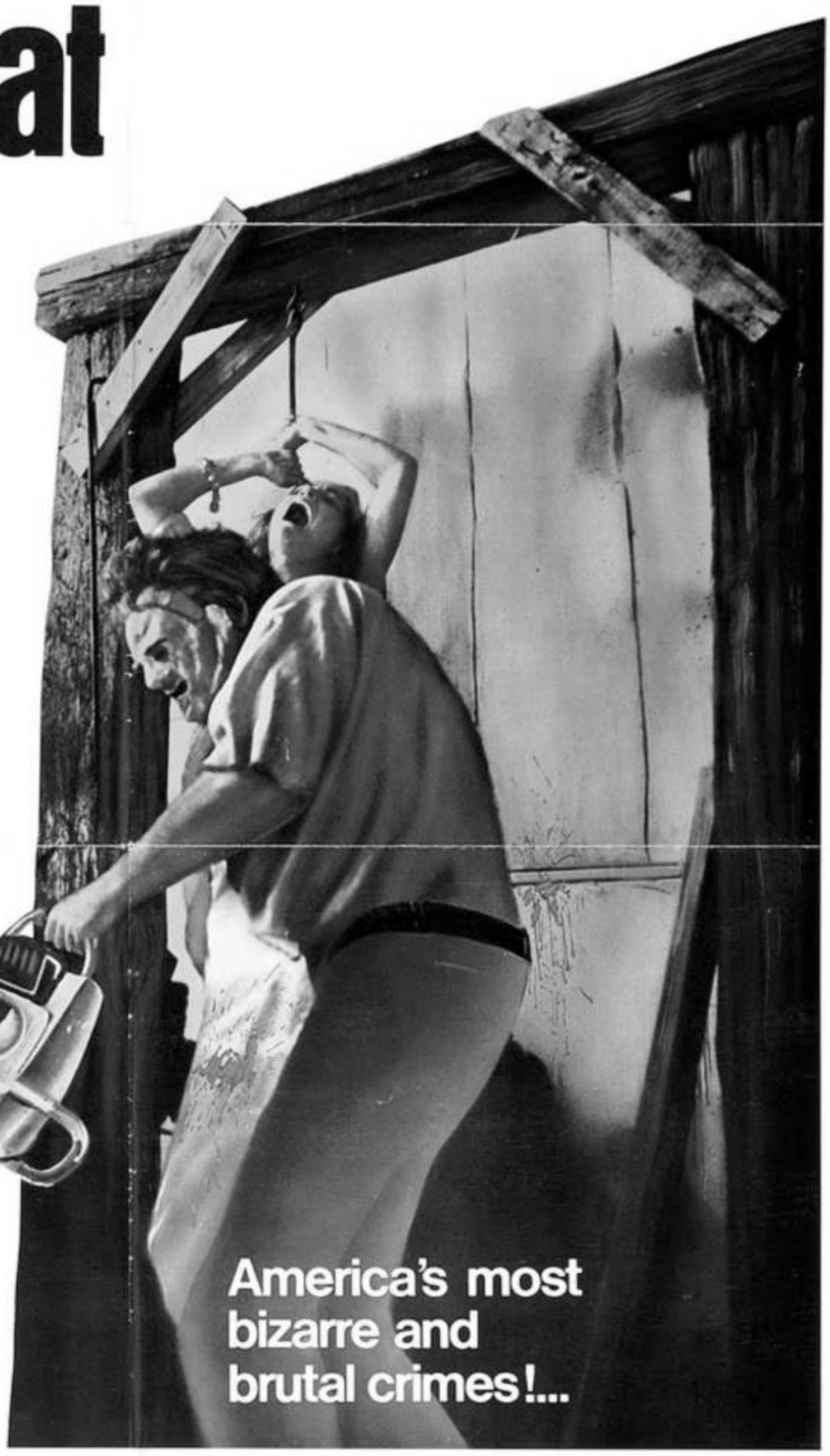
But despite the moral outrage surrounding it, *Psycho* set the bar for all horror films to follow, and was inducted into the Library of Congress's Film Registry in 1992, deemed "Culturally or historically significant." Though it may be considered dull and slow paced by today's standards, it was truly shocking stuff in 1960. It was (and is) one of those rare films that leaves its audience winded and shaking at the end.

Much like *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre.*

Fourteen years *Psycho*'s junior, *Chainsaw* premiered in the autumn of 1974. Made on a shoestring budget, the film, which follows a group of teenagers



Who will survive and what will be left of them?



"THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE"

What happened is true. Now the motion picture that's just as real.

THE TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE · A Film by TOBE HOOPER · Starring MARILYN BURNS, PAUL A. PARTAIN, EDWIN NEAL, JIM SIEDOW and GUNNAR HANSEN as "Leatherface" Production Manager, RONALD BOZMAN · Music Score by TOBE HOOPER and WAYNE BELL · Music Performed by ARKEY BLUE, ROGER BARTLETT & FRIENDS, TIMBERLINE ROSE, LOS CYCLONES · Story & Screenplay by KIM HENKEL and TOBE HOOPER · Producer / Director, TOBE HOOPER · COLOR · A BRYANSTON PICTURES RELEASE.

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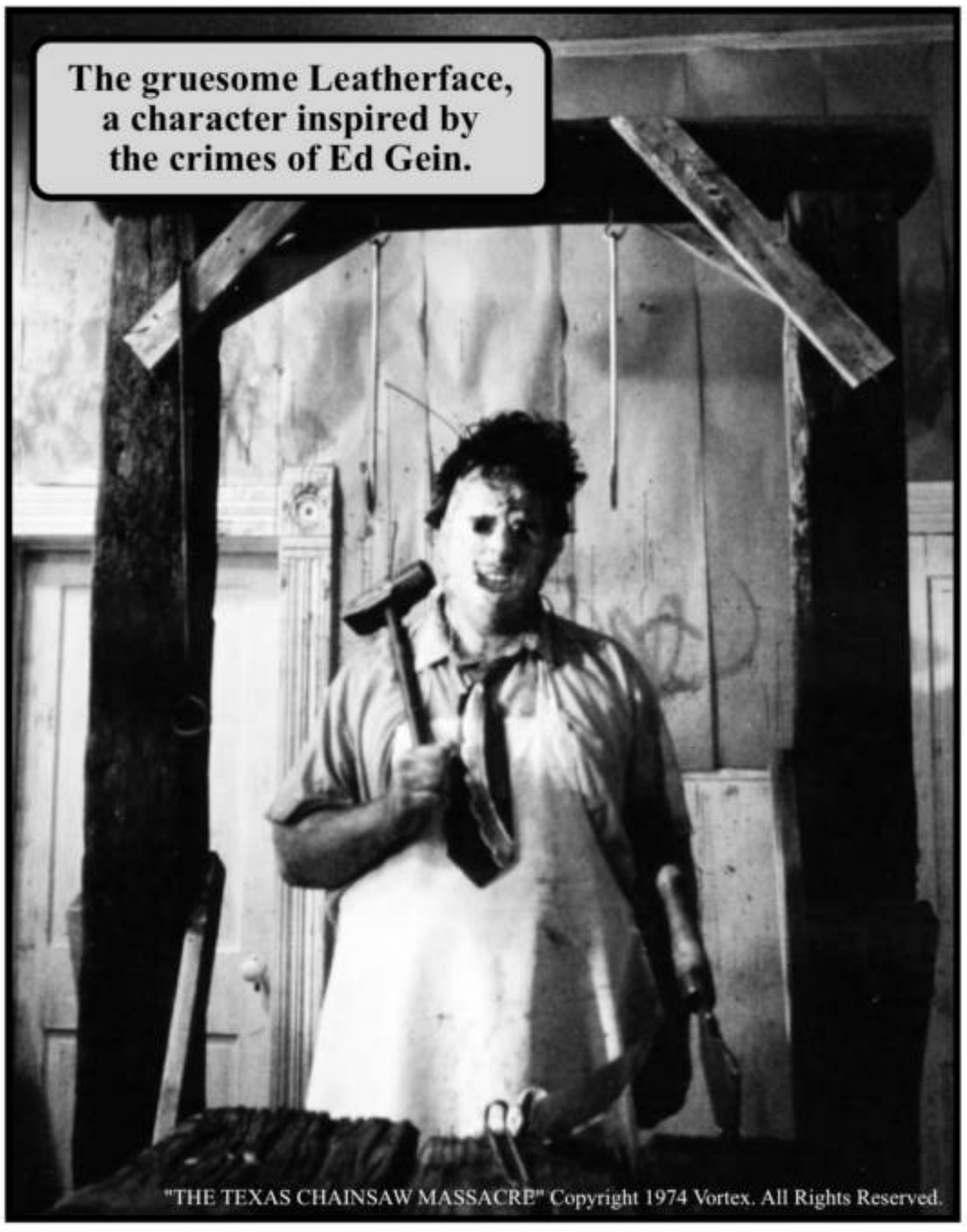
being picked off one-by-one by a family of backwoods cannibals, grossed 30 million dollars during its initial run. A contender for greatest film (horror or otherwise) of all time, *Chainsaw*'s enduring popularity has led to a number of sequels, several remakes, millions of dollars' worth of merchandise, and even an Atari 2600 video game (one of the first horror-themed games ever released).

Unarguably one of the best horror films of all time, *Chainsaw* nevertheless owes much of its popularity to a misconception: as a marketing strategy, its director, Tobe Hooper, claimed that it was based on a true story. To this day, many fans believe that Leatherface and his depraved family of man-eaters actually existed. The fact of the matter is, they didn't. *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* was not based on a true story.

But, like *Psycho*, it was *inspired* by one.



The gruesome Leatherface, a character inspired by the crimes of Ed Gein.

"THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE" Copyright 1974 Vortex. All Rights Reserved.

II. The Man

Born in 1906 La Crosse, Wisconsin, Ed Gein spent an oppressive childhood in nearby Plainfield. Completely dominated by his religious zealot mother, Gein was taught early on that the world was innately evil and that all women (with the exception of her) were whores. Neither he nor his brother, Henry, were allowed friends or a social life, and divided their time between school, chores, and nightly Bible readings.

Sheltered from the world until his father's death in 1940, Gein began working odd jobs to help with household bills, making his money mainly by babysitting. In 1944, Henry Gein was killed in a brush fire on the family property, and Eddie had mother to himself.

But not for long.

Mother died in 1945, and Gein was crushed; he sealed her room off from the rest of the house and confined himself to a small room off the kitchen. During the ensuing years, Gein, who had always been an avid reader, began devouring lurid pulp magazines and anatomical texts.

Around 1947, he began visiting local cemeteries while in a "daze-like" state. With the aid of a mentally challenged man named Gus, Gein robbed something like forty graves, sometimes taking whole bodies, and others only choice bits and pieces.

Feast of Flesh: Cannibalism is just one of the many horrors on display in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974).

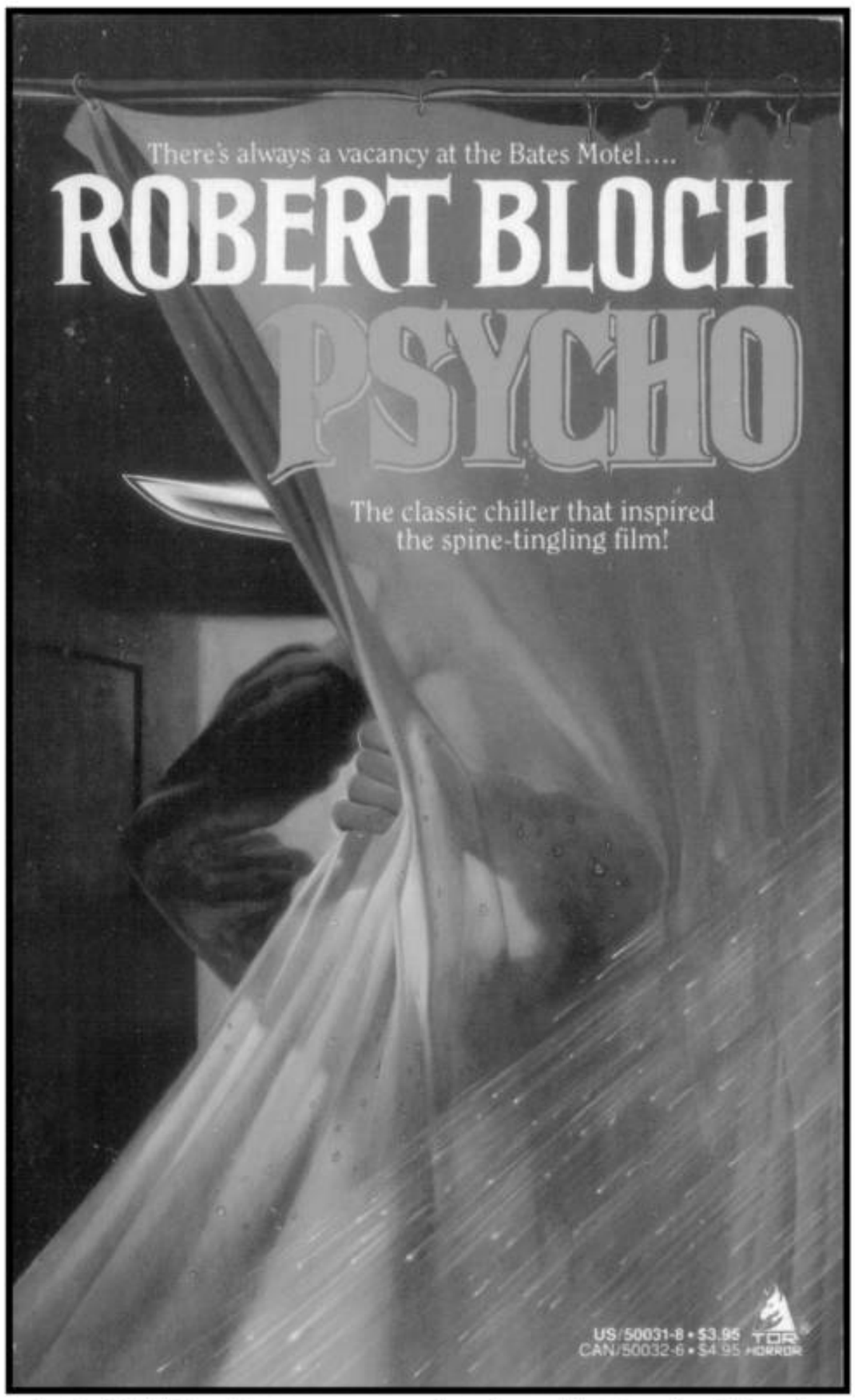
"THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE" Copyright 1974 Vortex. All Rights Reserved.

In 1954, Gein graduated from grave robbery to murder. His first victim was Mary Hogan, a local tavern owner who went missing from her bar one night along with the cash register. Three years later, in 1957, a hardware store owner named Bernice Worden disappeared. Luckily, her son knew that Gein would be stopping by that day, and alerted authorities.

What the police found in that decaying farmhouse would haunt them for the rest of their lives: severed heads adorning the walls like fine art; tanned flesh stretched across lampshades and chair cushions; skulls sitting atop bedposts; and a box of female genitalia moldering in a corner. To cap it

all off, Bernice Worden was in the kitchen, her headless body gutted and hanging from a meat hook.

The discovery of Gein's crimes stunned the nation. An author named Robert Bloch, who lived a few towns over from Gein, heard about the story and made it into a book: "Psycho," which Alfred Hitchcock later



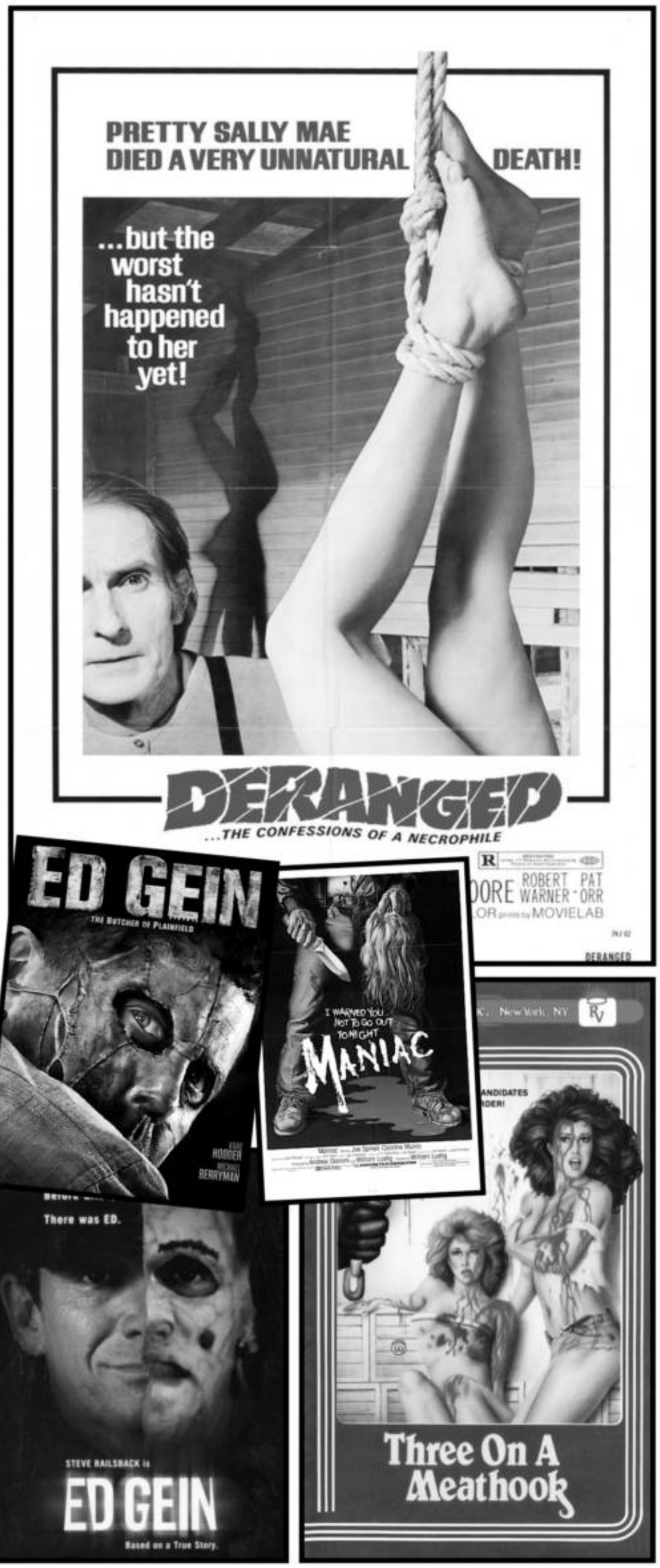
adapted. Tobe Hooper was also heavily inspired by the case (the chainsaw part was all him, though; trapped in a crowded mall during the holiday shopping season, he spotted a chainsaw in a hardware store and considered taking it up and cutting his way to the door). The events portrayed in *Psycho* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* never happened, despite what you might hear to the contrary.

Ed Gein, however, did.

III. The Myth

Though he never wrote a word in his life, Gein did more to shape modern horror than almost anyone else; two of the most culturally significant horror films ever made owe their very existence to him. They are often referenced and paid homage to in films, books, and television shows, and frequently top various greatest ever lists. In the annals of crime, Gein's case is still famous as one of the most bizarre and depraved. A number of biopics have been made about his life (such as *Ed Gein*, 2000, and *Ed Gein: The Butcher of Plainfield*, 2007) and countless films have fictionalized his story, among them *Three on a Meat Hook* (1973), *Deranged* (1974), and *Maniac* (1980).

Unfortunately, Gein died in a mental asylum in 1984, never knowing the impact of his crimes. Today, his name is remembered by only a discerning few. His legacy, however, lives on.



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12 **Pennies that *The Incredible Hulk* #1 cost back in May 1962.**

15 **Weeks that the *Planet of the Apes* television show lasted until it was cancelled.**

30 **Days it took Alfred Hitchcock to film *Psycho* (1960).**

291 **Episodes produced of *Dragon Ball Z*.**

1,000 **Masks of Mil Mascaras; often called 'The Man of a Thousand Masks'.**

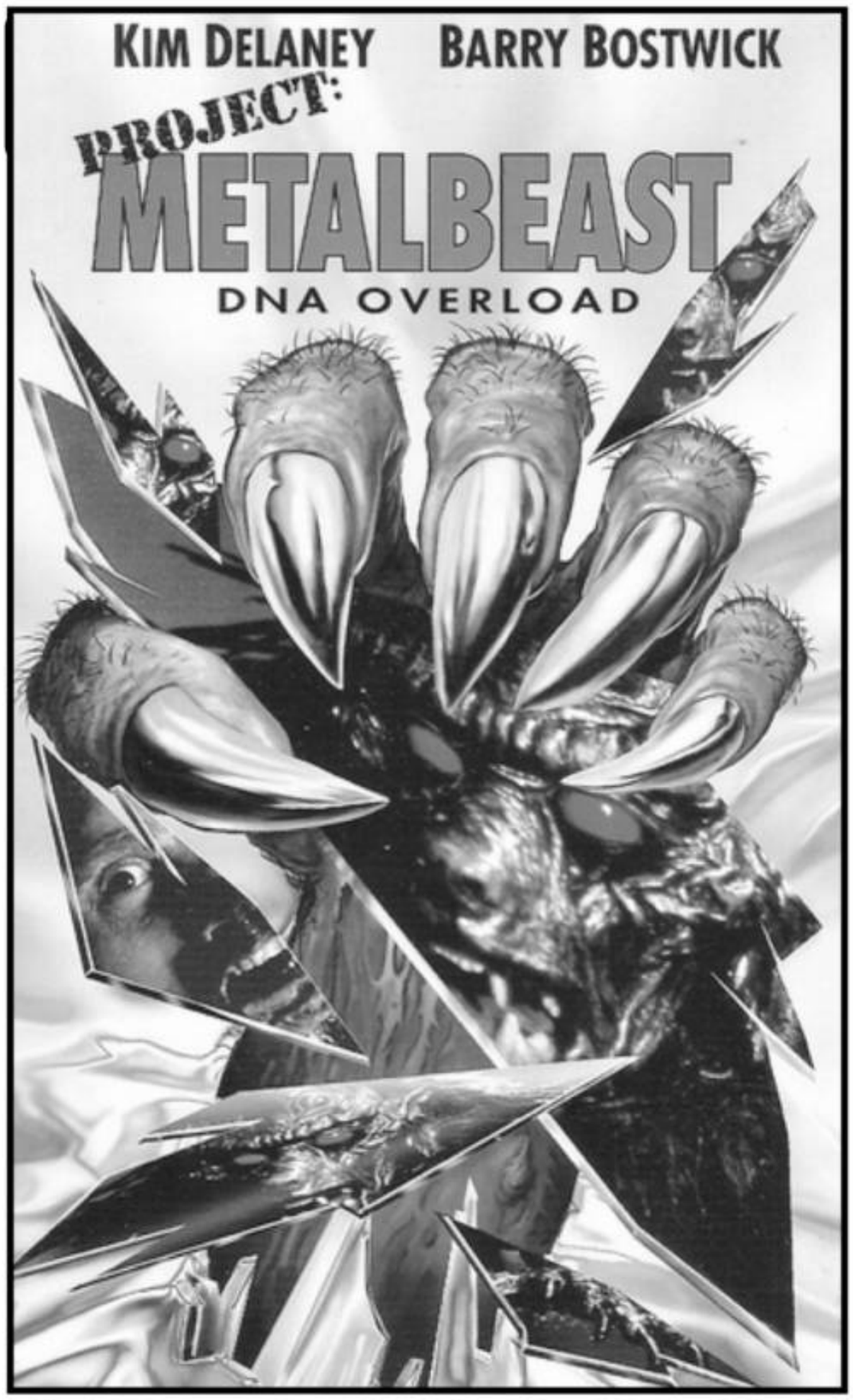
1,600 **Dollar budget for *Within the Woods*, Sam Raimi's short film that set the stage for *The Evil Dead* (1981).**

Reviews of the Best (And Worst) in Horror, Sci-Fi & Fantasy!

BEYOND FANTASTIQUE!

[**bee-ond:** *outside the understanding, limits, or reach of; past: beyond comprehension.*]
[**fan-tas-teek:** *a French term for a cinematic or literary genre encompassing horror, science fiction and fantasy.*]

CINEMA:



PROJECT: METALBEAST

Prism Entertainment; 1995, Running Time: 92 Min., Dir: Alessandro De Gaetano, Writers: Alessandro De Gaetano, Timothy E. Sabo, Roger Steinmann; Cast: Barry Bostwick, Kim Delaney, Kane Hodder.

BY THE LIGHT OF THE SILVERY MOON

One of the biggest things I love about lower budget movies is their creativity. Most often, mainstream films seem to follow a set pattern and, not always, but often, feel like the same old, same old. *Project: Metalbeast* is an example of creativity with a low budget. They take the usual werewolf movie and put a unique spin on it by making the werewolf bulletproof.

The movie is directed by Alessandro De Gaetano, who only went on to direct one film after this. He wrote another werewolf movie in 2010 called *Neowolf* or *The Band from Hell*. The film turned out so terribly that the director, Yvan Gauthier, had his name removed from it.

Project: Metalbeast is, at its core, about a government experiment gone wrong...twice. The government wants to create an army of super-soldiers, so they have an agent go to Hungary to retrieve some werewolf blood. The agent decides he wants to be the super-soldier, so he injects himself with the blood. After he changes and goes on a rampage, he is detained and cryogenically frozen. Years later, a group of scientists that have developed artificial skin for burn victims is given the agent's cadaver to use as a test subject. After replacing most of the skin on the agent's body, he returns to life and is almost entirely bulletproof, thanks to this new synthetic skin.

The movie plays pretty straightforward, and while there is a subplot about the government conspiracy, it is never hidden from the audience, so it isn't some out-of-the-blue plot twist. The movie starts slowly, but once the beast is released, it kicks into high gear. The scientists get picked off one by one at first, then there's an epic showdown that you have to see to believe.

The effects are fantastic for such a small film. Kane Hodder of the *Friday the 13th* series is a great werewolf. His massive frame towers over the rest of the cast. We don't get to see him too much, but when we do, it is impressive. I'll take a guy in a werewolf suit over the lame, talking, CGI wolves of the *Twilight* series. Hodder in a prosthetic suit looks 10 times better and costs 1000 times less, although the film could have benefited from a slightly larger budget. There are times where you can tell the werewolf suit is just rubber, and there are many cutaways for shots they obviously couldn't afford. It doesn't take away from the film; it just makes you wonder, "What could have been?" The film doesn't shy away from the gore. The surgery scenes are quite gruesome, and the werewolf shreds most of its victims. It's a nice reminder of what werewolves do in R-rated films.

Kim Delaney and Barry Bostwick are both no strangers to low and high budget movies. They brought an extra layer of class to the film and helped to make it feel a bit more serious, even though at times it does get a tad silly.

The biggest crime the movie committed was coming out a few years too early. If this was released in, say, 1997 instead of 1995, then it would already be on DVD. As it stands, though, it is still trapped in the obscurity of VHS. You would think the popularity of the main stars would be enough for them to make the

transfer. I've seen many lesser movies get a DVD release. It is, by far, one of my highest requested movies to be released on DVD. It's a shame that nowadays we take it for granted that every good, bad, or mediocre film gets a DVD or Blu-ray release. Here, we have a very well-shot action horror film that most will never see because, quite frankly, not many people still have VHS players.

Overall, *Project: Metalbeast* is a blast and one of the most unique werewolf movies you'll ever see. If you can track down a copy on VHS, it is totally worth seeing. Me, I'll keep hassling Prism Entertainment until they release it on DVD.

Reviewed by Cecil Trachenburg
Check out www.GoodBadFlicks.com for Cecil's video reviews with new episodes premiering Sunday nights.

THE HORROR AT 37,000 FEET

Columbia Broadcasting System; 1973, Running Time: 73 Min., Dir: David Lowell Rich, Writers: Ronald Austin, James D. Buchanan; Cast: William Shatner, Chuck Conners, Buddy Ebsen.

A CURSED FLIGHT

To the uninitiated, the mere mention of William Shatner starring in *The Horror at 37,000 Feet* may conjure up images of the famous *Twilight Zone* episode, "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet". Similar names, to be sure, but where the *Twilight Zone* tells the tale of Shatner encountering a destructive gremlin on an airplane wing, *The Horror at 37,000 Feet* plays out like a haunted house film set within the confines of a luxurious Boeing 747.

There were a number of trends during the 1970s with the 'disaster movie fad' at the forefront, spawning titles such as *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972), *The Towering Inferno* (1974), and *Earthquake* (1974). However, among these, few were as lasting as the airplane disaster subgenre that ignited with *Airport* (1970) – generating three sequels in the process! The other popular movie genre at the time was a particular brand of horror, specifically horror that focused on the Satanic or occult. With the massive box-office successes of *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and *The Exorcist* (1973) a slew of like-minded films were set to flood both theaters and television. In many ways, *The Horror at 37,000 Feet* – a made-for-television special – feels like an amalgamation of the airplane disaster subgenre mixed with an occult twist. It's also worth mentioning that the film's director, David Lowell Rich, would later go on to direct *Satan's School for Girls* (1973) and *Airport '79* (1979).

"THE HORROR AT 37,000 FEET" Copyright 1973 CBS Television. All Rights Reserved.

The Horror at 37,000 Feet revolves around a mismatched assortment of passengers, including a former priest-turned-alcoholic played by Shatner. Buddy Ebsen (*The Beverly Hillbillies*) ambles around as a wealthy hotel owner, Roy Thinnes (*The Invaders*) plays an architect, and Paul Winfield (*Sounder*) is a worldly doctor. Little do they know that the remains of an ancient monastery, stored in the airplane's cargo hold, have been cursed by vengeful druid spirits. Immediately after departure strange happenings begin to occur. An eerie coldness sweeps through the airplane emanating from the hold. The navigational equipment goes on the fritz. Goopy ooze seeps out from the aisles while a dense mist shrouds the interior. The situation continues to escalate after several crew members are killed off, a dog is frozen (literally) in place, and a woman starts speaking in Latin – as all possessed beings typically do.

Chuck Conners (*The Rifleman*) even lends his talents as an unwavering pilot who tries to keep everything together despite all hell breaking loose. When it becomes clear that the only hope of survival is to placate the evil presence, the passengers – now verging on becoming a crazed mob – patch together a makeshift voodoo doll adorned with human fingernails, hair, and weird make-up to stand in as a mock sacrifice. The attempt fails miserably and the druid spirits ramp up

"THE HORROR AT 37,000 FEET" Copyright 1973 CBS Television. All Rights Reserved.

their merciless onslaught upon all concerned.

Some of *The Horror at 37,000 Feet* may come across as laughable and schlocky today, particularly one unforgettable 'special effect' scene near the end, but there's an undeniable eeriness present throughout the film. As expected, Shatner goes all out at times and his overacting is unintentional comedy gold – who could forget his performances in *The Devil's Rain* (1975) and *Kingdom of the Spiders* (1977) – but the overall product

is a delightful treat for open-minded horror fans not looking for anything too serious. It's really a shame that *The Horror at 37,000 Feet* has become such an obscure oddity since it sports something of an original concept. It could even make for an interesting remake especially given a modest budget that the original clearly didn't have; perhaps, with the remake craze still in full swing, we won't have long to wait…

Reviewed by Stan Fuller

IT! THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE
MGM Studios; 1958, Running Time: 69 Min., Dir: Edward L. Cahn, Writer: Jerome Bixby; Cast: Marshall Thompson, Shirley Patterson, Kim Spalding.

BEFORE RIPLEY FOUGHT ALIENS, THERE WAS...IT!

In 1979, director Ridley Scott (*Blade Runner*) and Dan O'Bannon (*Return of the Living Dead*) created one of the best and most iconic horror films in history with the advent of *Alien*. Basically *Old Dark House* (1932) in space, *Alien* was the definition of a classic horror film updated and immersed in science fiction and it blew people's minds with its freshness and originality, not to mention the Lovecraftian designs of H.R. Giger.

However, fans of old science fiction from the 1950s may have noticed the striking similarity between *Alien* and another milestone of SF Cinema, *It! The Terror from Beyond Space*. It is now common knowledge that Mr. O'Bannon was a huge fan of *It!* and wrote the screenplay with more than a passing nod to this classic film, just as Ridley Scott utilized many elements and situations in the making of *Alien*. It never fails to surprise me how many people have not seen *Alien* so it comes as no surprise that *It! The Terror from Beyond Space* is also forgotten by the majority of film fans, despite its reputation as a classic of the genre. Thank goodness Netflix has added it to their streaming list so I could write this nifty review and hopefully open more people up to one of the most influential films in science fiction history.

The year is 1973 and the first manned mission to Mars has occurred. However, on arrival, the ship broke up, putting the lives of the crewmen in jeopardy. A rescue ship is soon dispatched and when they arrive they find Lieutenant Carruthers (Marshall Thompson) the sole survivor of the mission. When he is questioned, he tells a fabulous story of some "shape" that plucked his men out of a jeep one by one while they were exploring until Carruthers was the only one who made it back to the ruined spacecraft alive. The captain of the rescue vessel, Van Heusen (Kim Spalding), is positive

Carruthers murdered his crew to last longer marooned on Mars and is determined to get the truth out of him before their return to Earth. The tension is heightened when Van's paramour, Ann (Shirely Patterson) begins to fall for Carruthers and does not disbelieve his story. To complicate matters further, the alien marauder sneaks aboard the ship and begins picking the crew off one by one. This causes some concern as people start disappearing because they are in an enclosed ship with only so many levels in which to hide. Where did the missing crew members go?

Much like in *Alien*, the air ducts provide the monster the means to move about and hide bodies, and it doesn't take much time for the crew to determine it's whereabouts. The solution? Wire grenades to the duct entrances and blow the creature up when it exits (let us not forget, we are aboard a space ship. Grenades. Space ship). Problem solved. Business goes on as usual until they hear explosions. Upon examination, the monster is still healthy and the ship's integrity has not been breached. Something has to be done, but what? Bullets have no effect (on the monster or the ship). Gas grenades are tried and they too fail to kill the monster or ruin the limited oxygen supply.

"IT! THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE" Copyright 1958 MGM. All Rights Reserved.

A couple of these guys saw *Thing from Another World* (1951) so they sneak around the outside of the ship to set up an electricity trap on some stairs. Not only does that fail to kill the monster (or any of the crewmembers that use them), it results in one of the crew trapped on the level the monster has claimed as it's own! Good thing they're able to hold the creature at bay with a propane torch for several hours. They even trick the monster into the room where the radiation core is and open it full-blast, irritating the monster to no end but somehow not harming any part of the ship or it's occupants. People keep dying and getting injured and the crew keeps moving further up the ship until there is no place to run and only one bulkhead stands between them and certain death. Fortunately they have a bazooka placed in front of their most important computer bank in case the monster breaks in, which of course it does with aplomb.

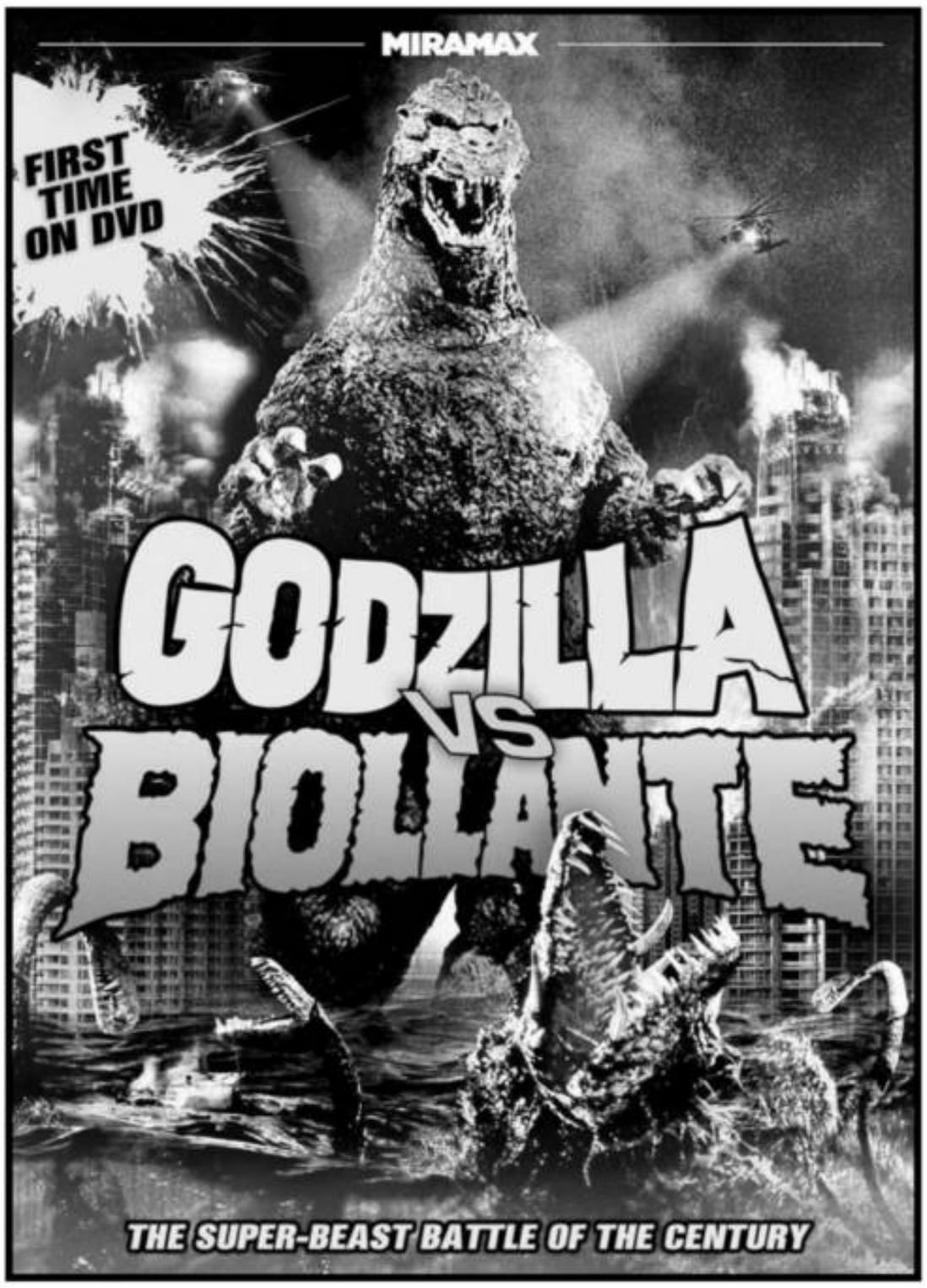
The bazooka also has no effect except angering the creature. Good thing that computer bank wasn't fried because Carruthers figures out the monster has a huge capacity for oxygen and they finally defeat it by opening an airlock and sucking all the oxygen out of the ship. Tragically, Van Heusen bites the dust, leaving Ann and Carruthers to build a new relationship after the horrible events they witnessed. The film ends with the statement that maybe Mars is best left alone in our exploration of the Solar System.

Sure, *It! The Terror from Beyond Space* is a little cheesy and we certainly didn't know as much about space travel as we do now but the movie does not fail to build tension and provide a wonderful viewing experience. Though low budget, the settings are claustrophobic and the dark, creepy atmosphere is almost palpable, enhanced by the black and white film. The monster, much like in *Alien*, is not seen much until the end, heightening the suspense and the acting from the principal cast is serviceable, getting you into the characters and building concern for their fate. The romance sub-plot is a little trite but, again, for a low-budget quicky, this film brings the entertainment in spades. As mentioned, there are some terribly stupid things that occur but it doesn't lessen the enjoyment value of the film; the instances seem to elicit the requisite chuckles but does not remove you from the events occurring on screen – something most modern movies fail at completely – and carries you along through it's surprisingly short 69 minute run time.

It! The Terror from Beyond Space is one of the

best of the classic 1950s science fiction films and hugely influential, being remade as *Alien* and influencing even more films through this new version. Not at all hampered by it's inherent silliness, *It!* still holds up as a fun, creepy, atmospheric monster movie in space and is definitely worth the watch. Running little more than an hour, it should fit into your viewing schedule quite easily and is definitely better than most hour programs viewed on cable television. Take advantage of *It! The Terror from Beyond Space*'s availability. You'll be glad you did and you'll also be seeing one of the most important and influential films ever made…and be massively entertained in the process.

Reviewed by Tron DeLapp
More of Tron's reviews can be found on www.CyberMonkeyDeathSquad.com



GODZILLA VS. BIOLLANTE
Toho Co, Ltd.; 1989, Running Time: 105 Min., Dir: Kazuki Ohmori, Writers: Shinichiro Kobayashi, Kazuki Ohmori; Cast: Kunihiko Mitamura, Yoshiko Tanaka, Masanobu Takashima.

EVERY ROSE HAS ITS THORN

Following the events of *Godzilla 1985*, tissue samples from the radioactive monster known as Godzilla – now scattered through the ruins of Tokyo – have become a valuable scientific find. However, when Dr. Shiragami combines the DNA of his deceased daughter

"GODZILLA VS. BIOLLANTE" Copyright 1989 Toho Co., Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

with roses and Godzilla cells, he unwittingly creates Biollante – a plant like creature of enormous size. The situation is further exacerbated when a terrorist group detonates Mt. Mihara, releasing Godzilla from his volcanic grave (where he was entombed in the preceding film).

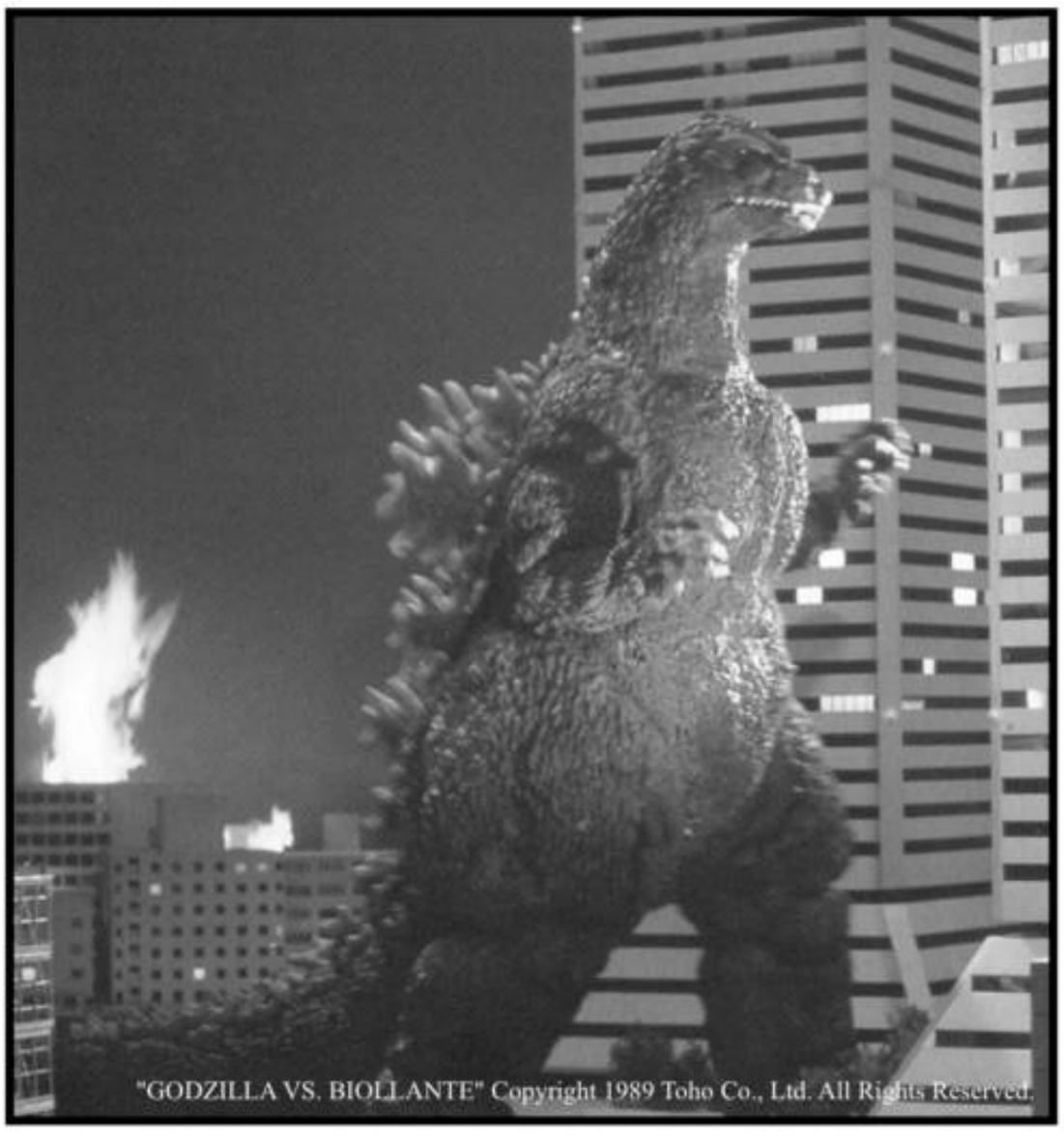
The military tries to stop Godzilla but even with Japan's latest technological wonder, the Super X II, their efforts prove unsuccessful. As if linked to Biollante, Godzilla quickly seeks out the botanical beast and a monstrous showdown begins.

Few entries in Toho's long-running Godzilla series have the originality and sheer imagination of *Godzilla vs. Biollante*. The story is somewhat plodding in the beginning with far too much emphasis on the Bio-Major terrorist organization and the creation of 'Anti-Nuclear Energy Bacteria'. Yet, once Godzilla is awakened, the plot kicks into high gear. Biollante is one of the most original creations to ever be pitted against Godzilla and both of the new monster's forms are impressive sights to behold, the final transformation in particular is a towering spectacle that dwarfs Godzilla in size. The Big G himself has never looked better either, and the special effects are top-notch. There's also the introduction of psychic Miki Segusa (Megumi Odaka) who would go on to become a mainstay character in the 'Heisei' run of Godzilla films spanning from 1989 to 1995.

Thanks to Echo Bridge Entertainment, *Godzilla vs. Biollante* has finally been given a DVD and Blu-ray release. Both formats include the film in its original Japanese language (5.1 and 2.0 DTS options) and a 1.0 Dolby Digital English dub track. The picture quality, particularly of the Blu-ray, easily trumps that of the previous VHS and laser disc releases. There's also two worthwhile special features, "The Making of *Godzilla vs. Biollante*" and a "Behind the Design" featurette. Most G-Fans outside of Japan know how often bonus content gets excluded from these sort of releases, so a round of applause to Echo Bridge for securing those features. A commentary with Godzilla cinephile Ed Godziszewski was to be included as well but, unfortunately, it wasn't approved by Toho in time for release, so it had to be left out.

Godzilla vs. Biollante may not be the very best Godzilla film, but it certainly stands as a worthy entry in the franchise and a brilliant follow-up to *Godzilla 1985*. It's also one of the series' darker titles and explores themes of genetic manipulation and the boundaries of science that few films of the kaiju genre dare to touch. This is one not to miss!

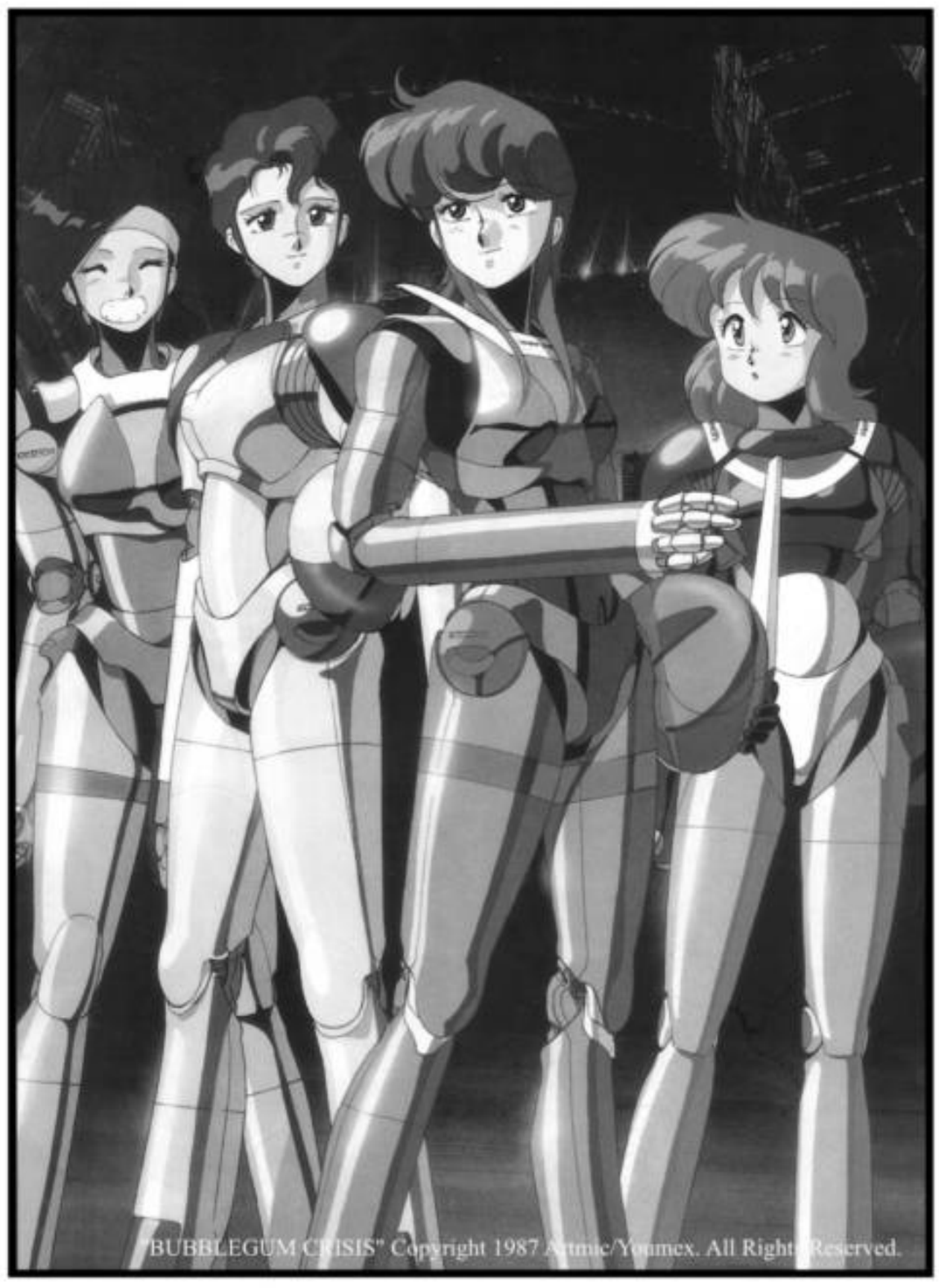
Reviewed by Mark Sasahara



ANIME:

BUBBLEGUM CRISIS

Artmic/Youmex; 1987, 8 episodes. Story by Toshimichi Suzuki. Cast: Yoshiko Sakakibara, Kinuko Omori, Michie Tomizawa.



ROCK 'N ROLL CYBER PUNK

Bubblegum Crisis is an OVA series that saw its original release spread across five years, from 1987 to 1991. Animated by AIC and produced jointly by Artmic and Youmex, a total of eight episodes were released. The sci-fi action series is set in a futuristic Tokyo dubbed Mega Tokyo; a city that has been reshaped by a massive earthquake, and in which the gargantuan corporation

Genom holds sway.

The series focuses on four young women who work together as a team called the Knight Sabers. Wearing combat armor known as hard suits, they work together as mercenaries and fight against the proliferation of weaponized androids, commonly referred to as boomers, and their creators within Genom. The four protagonists, Sylia, Linna, Nene, and Priss, come from vastly diverse backgrounds, but as a team, they prove to be more than adept at fighting off boomer threats.

"BUBBLEGUM CRISIS" Copyright 1987 Artmic/Youmex. All Rights Reserved.

If the name "Priss" sounds familiar to you, it might be because it was also the name of a character from the 1982 Harrison Ford sci-fi film *Blade Runner*. *Bubblegum Crisis* actually references the film in both overt and subtle ways. When she isn't busy with her Knight Saber work, the Priss of *Bubblegum Crisis* is the lead singer in a band called the Replicants. "Replicant" is the term used for androids in the *Blade Runner* universe that are disguised as humans so well that it requires a specialized test to determine if a suspect is in fact artificial or human. And to circle back around, boomers bear nearly impeccable human disguises, much like replicants (though boomers are much more apt to shed their human skin while in battle).

Over the course of the eight episodes, the Knight Sabers battle boomers, both from Genom and other adversaries. They also tackle unrelated missions such as stopping a rogue driver using a special car to murder bikers. Common threads carry over from episode to episode, introducing us to villains such as Genom executive Brian J. Mason and the CEO, referred to only as Quincy. The Knight Sabers also get help from Leon, a detective in the AD Police with romantic interest in Priss, and whose attitude generally allows him to accomplish a great deal more than the average cop.

Unfortunately, while the plot builds in an interesting direction, like *Fire Emblem*, it was cut short. Details as to why are sparse, at least as far as I've been able to find on English websites in the time I've had to search. However, they're also the sketchy sort of sparse that only Wikipedia can provide. (Though, I did get a little bit of secondary sourcing from Anime News Network, but even that isn't much.) What my beyond amateurish sleuthing can tell you is this: after production of the eighth episode had concluded, Artmic and Youmex had a falling out, and as a result, the primary storyline was left unfinished in its original form. The final episode, one of the lighter entries, focuses on the Knight Sabers' fight against a lunatic terrorist that attempts to destroy the AD Police building, leaving the conflicts with the greater villains unresolved. Artmic went on to produce *Bubblegum Crash*, a three-episode sequel meant to continue the story, leading to a legal battle with Youmex. When all was said and done, Artmic bankrupted in 1997, Youmex took on their debt, and then was merged back into its parent company Toshiba EMI in 1998.

But all of the real-world legal drama aside, the eight episodes of *Bubblegum Crisis* that were produced are top notch. The character and mecha designs are stylish and memorable, and the animation direction has a very cinematic feel to it, with plenty of interesting camera angles highlighting the choreography of the action. Of particularly special note, however, is the soundtrack; each episode features its own opening and ending theme, and many of the vocal tracks are sung by Kinuko Ohmori, Priss's voice actress as well as a professional singer. The songs were localized for the English dub, with their vocals credited to "The Replicants."

"BUBBLEGUM CRISIS" Copyright 1987 Artmic/Youmex. All Rights Reserved.

Bubblegum Crisis remains a classic of the genre. Despite the dated nature of its sci-fi universe (think 2033 by way of 1987), it's still held up on the strength of the four leads, its entertaining writing, and the solid direction of the action. It's easy to jump in, and though it doesn't really have an ending, the ride is a fun one while it lasts.

Bubblegum Crisis was released on DVD in North America by AnimEigo. The DVDs contain both an English dub as well as the original Japanese with subtitles in English and French. The series is not rated, but the publisher suggests it for ages 13 and up. It contains brief nudity, violence, and some mild adult situations.

Reviewed by Justin Graham
More of Justin's reviews can be found on www.OperationRainfall.com

INUYASHA: THE FINAL ACT

Sunrise; 2009, 26 episodes. Dir: Yasunao Aoki, Writer: Katsuyuki Sumizawa; Cast: Kappei Yamaguchi, Satsuki Yukino, Ken Narita.

THE FINAL CHAPTER IN A FEUDAL FAIRY TALE

It's undeniable that both the *InuYasha* manga and anime have a rabid following in Japan. With Adult Swim's English dubbed broadcast of the anime between 2002 and 2006, which proved to be a hit in North America, *InuYasha* had continued to enthrall audiences the world over. Sadly, when the original 167 episode anime series came to an end, there was little closure to the show leaving many to guess at the main cast of characters' fate (unless they continued reading the manga).

Now, *InuYasha* fans are finally treated to the last gripping chapter of the anime saga in all its glory with the appropriately titled *Final Act*. For those unfamiliar with the series, *InuYasha* follows the journey of Kagome, a modern day schoolgirl who finds that the old well next to her house is a portal capable of transporting her to Japan's feudal era, teeming with villagers, samurai, and – most of all – demons! Through her adventure she joins up with InuYasha, a half-demon, Miroku, a lecherous monk, Sango, a female demon slayer, and Shippo, a young fox demon, as they seek out the Shikon Jewel shards which can grant the user unimaginable power. It's to this end that they must prevent the shards from falling into the hands of the villainous demon, Naraku.

InuYasha: The Final Act finds our heroes in the midst of figuring out how to destroy Naraku once and for all. It's far from an easy task as the evil demon throws everything in his arsenal at them. Characters die, some change allegiances and the action hits a high point never before seen in prior episodes. The animation itself is also markedly better, though not to say that it was lacking

before. The pacing is superior in every aspect too, since there's only a finite number of episodes produced to effectively conclude the series.

Without question, fans who are caught up with the preceding 167 episodes of *InuYasha* will want to check *The Final Act* out. Those not familiar with the epic series may want to hold off until they are more acquainted with some of the earlier episodes. Either way, it's great that *The Final Act* was produced and even better that the follow-up series is now available in the United States.

Reviewed by Lisa Stilts

VIDEO GAMES:

RESIDENT EVIL 6

Capcom, 2012; Platforms: Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3.

CAPCOM'S 'RESIDENT EVIL 6' IS PLAGUED BY PROBLEMS

Resident Evil 6 was a highly anticipated title released in October 2012. I, for one, was really looking forward to it. But, when the demo was released and I first got a taste at what the title offered, my feelings towards the game started to go a little sour.

RE6 has three different two-player campaigns to choose from; Leon Kennedy and Helena Harper, Chris Redfield and Piers Nivens, and Jake Muller and Sherry Birkin. Each campaign has a different feel to it, with its own HUD design, and of course, its own game mechanic problems.

Leon's campaign is the best overall, in terms of establishing the mood of terror and dread in the game, and the overall storyline. His campaign feels a lot like *Resident Evil 4* and is the closest to the heart of the series. Unfortunately, the combat system works against the player, the zombies are bullet sinks, and the command prompts for instant kills appears so intermittently that half of the time when you attempt to do them you get grabbed and injured by a zombie, as opposed to killing it.

Leon's campaign also has the most quick time events. In fact, there are so many QTEs in it, that when switching to Chris' or Sherry's campaign, I expected them to pop up in droves, but they didn't. Even stranger, the areas where there could have been a QTE in the other two campaigns, they were actually lacking them. While this isn't the biggest difference in game play between the campaigns, it is the most obvious one.

Chris' campaign is set in the war zone of Edonia and it feels like it's a combination of *Call of Duty* and *Gears of War*, not something that belongs to the *Resident Evil* franchise. Bullets are flying everywhere, and RPGs are being shot with reckless abandon by the bad guys as Chris charges through the battlefield, slamming into enemies and punching their brains in. But hey, at least he's not punching a boulder this time around, right?

The enemies in Chris' campaign are a bit questionable, with the giant Ogroman monster that towers above the buildings and chases after Chris in a scene more appropriate for a *Gears of War* title than something that would appear in *Resident Evil*. And that's even taking into account the giant mecha-Salazar

from *RE4*.

Sherry and Jake's campaign is nothing more than one big chase scene, with Jake and Sherry running for their lives from an unstoppable killing machine called the Ustanak; a cyborg Tyrant with a machine claw hand capable of skewering a man to death in under 30 seconds. The Ustanak is, by far, the most annoying of all of the monsters in the game, and it makes Sherry's campaign so frustrating that it's not even worth playing.

While I do love the idea of Leon Kennedy, Chris Redfield and Sherry Birkin interacting in a single game title, the cross-over scenes where characters from the other two campaigns make their cameos often feels forced. The character interactions are stiff and awkward, which is a shame, as it is clear that the main characters have met before and have a past together.

Of course, the plot of *RE6* is as serious as a Michael Bay movie; you get plenty of action sequences and a pinch of character development before the big bad is conquered and destroyed once and for all. However, in the case of *RE6*, all of the big bads come back to fight over, and over, and over again like a bad penny that you just can't get rid of no matter how hard you try.

Now, there's nothing wrong with the formula of having a boss monster mutate three different times as you fight it. But, when he starts coming back for the fifth, sixth, and yes, the seventh time, there is a problem. Whatever possessed the developers to think that they are out-doing their predecessors by creating relentless monsters that mutate multiple times and eat bullets like they are candy is beyond me.

However, this isn't the first time we've seen that in a *Resident Evil* title. Much like *Resident Evil 5*, most of the enemies in *RE6* are bullet sinks, and if there's one thing I can't stand, it's fighting monsters and pumping them full of lead to little or no effect. Not being able to kill a zombie in a few shots, or even stun or knock down a living person with one shot of a gun such as you could in *Resident Evil 4*, is not only unrealistic, it's downright annoying.

Terrible game mechanics aside, the main problem of *RE6* is that it lacks focus. It wants to be *Resident Evil 4*, *Call of Duty*, and *Gears of War* all at the same time, and it just doesn't work. Instead of just aiming for a happy medium between survival horror and an action shooter, which *Resident Evil 4* did quite well, they made an action horror title that can be described as nothing less than a train wreck.

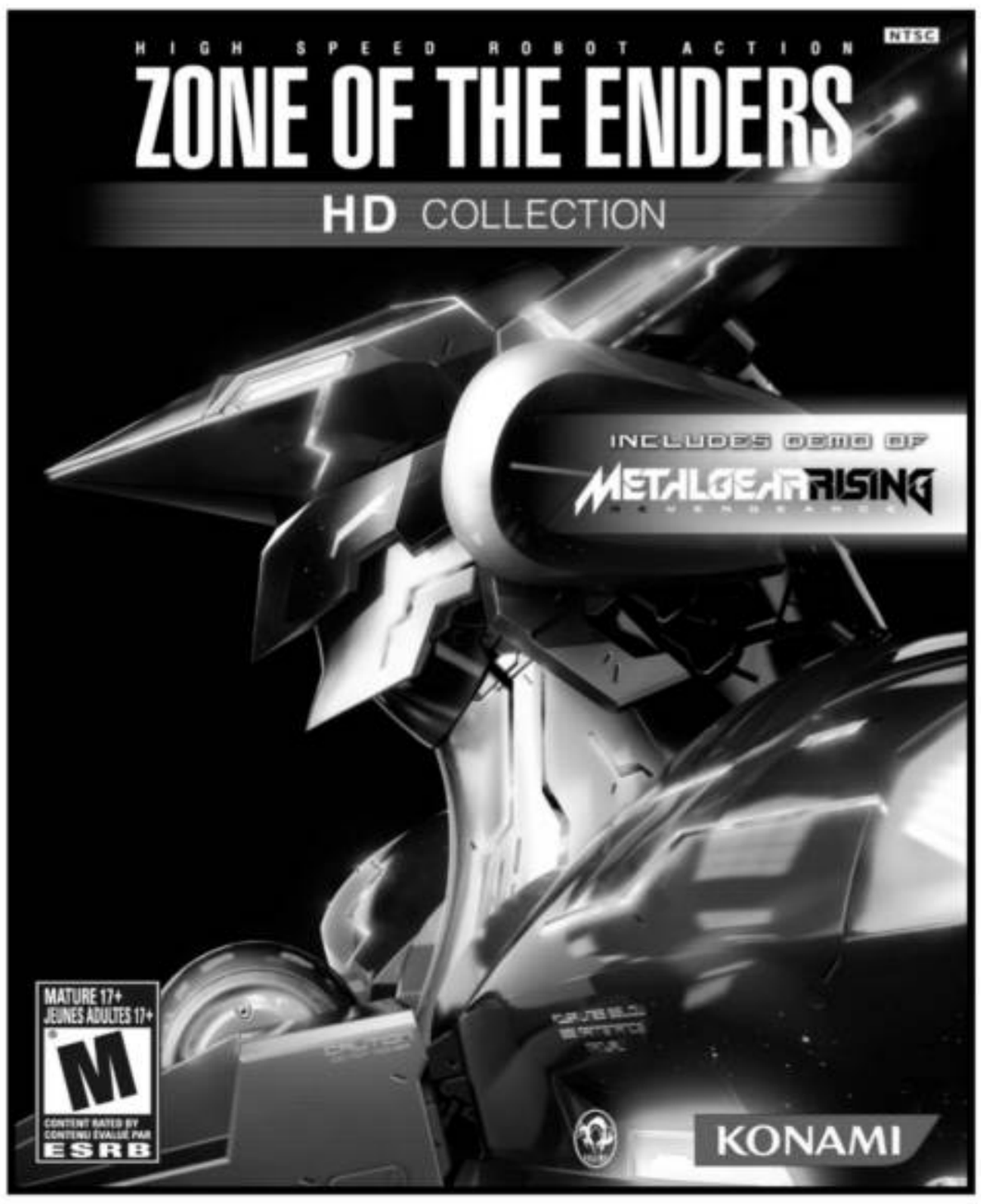
By trying to create their own horror version of *Call of Duty*, instead of focusing on making a good game which gets positive reviews and word of mouth support to increase its sales, they created a frustrating monstrosity that suffers from game mechanic glitches, questionable graphics quality, sub-par monsters, and a plot filled with more clichéd villains than a kid's cartoon series.

Capcom, it's not just enough to make a game that is attractive to a broader, more general gaming audience. You also have to make a game that is fun to play. Horror games that are fun to play have a single game mechanic system that has had most of it's bugs worked out prior to release, and a cohesive aesthetic vision, both of which *RE6* sorely lacks.

Reviewed by Cassie Carnage
More horror video game, movie and book reviews by Cassie can be found at CassiesHouseofHorror.blogspot.com

ZONE OF THE ENDERS HD COLLECTION
Konami; 2012, Kojima Productions; Platforms: Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3.

MECHA MADNESS



Young boy finds giant robot, unwillingly becomes pilot of said robot, and has to use his untested combat skills to save the planet. It's a tried and true formula associated with mecha anime, just look at *Mobile Suit Gundam*, *Macross*, and *Neon Genesis Evangelion* for the landmarks of the genre. It's ironic that, considering how many mecha anime titles there are, so few are ever given worthy video game tie-ins. Furthermore, the ones that do exist are rarely released outside of Japan. Of the ones that *have* been given an international release, 2001's *Zone of the Enders* for the PlayStation 2 ranks near the top, and is surpassed by its superior 2003 sequel, *Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner*. Fortunately, for those who would rather not dust off their aging PS2 consoles, Konami has paired these two games together in a stunning high-definition collection with trophy/achievement support.

The story takes place during the 22nd century, at which point humanity has colonized Mars, Jupiter, and built habitable space colonies. Not all is peaceful though; Earth is oppressive towards the space-dwellers, leading a radical faction called BAHRAM to take military action. The first game follows the journey of Leo Stenbuck, a young boy (who fits the anime hero cliché perfectly) caught in the ensuing conflict. He inadvertently becomes the pilot of a giant robot, or Orbital Frame as they're called, named Jehuty. As one might gather, Leo – and the player – is thrust upon a space-faring mission to destroy as many enemy Orbital Frames as possible.

Back in 2001 *Zone of the Enders* was a mind-blowing experience. The control layout and ease of combat made the player feel like they were in the midst of true mecha combat, and it was a glorious ride. Sadly, over a decade later, the feeling isn't as captivating. At times it's still fun, no doubt, but in an era when video games are capable of imbuing thought provoking, intricate stories upon the player, *Zone of the Enders* falls short. This is all the more surprising since the game was produced by Hideo Kojima, creator of the brilliant *Metal Gear Solid* series. Regardless, *Zone* feels shallow and lacks the powerful themes that Kojima is known for incorporating into his titles. There's some minor touches about morality since Leo refuses to kill, but since most of the enemies are unmanned A.I., it's never a prominent issue.

In 2001 *Zone* was praised for its level design, controls, and graphics, but lauded for its brief campaign, and rightfully so – it can be beaten in just a few hours, and there's little replay value to be found. Yet, in 2013, the short playtime actually helps *Zone of the Enders* simply because its problematic nature will pass by quickly. Many of the missions feel uninspired, the enemies aren't particularly interesting, and by the time the plot feels like it's finally moving forward, the game abruptly ends. It's also a very depressing story, Leo is a walking death magnet and there's little respite or relief for the character at any point.

But all is not lost. *Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner* is the sole reason for purchasing this collection. The sequel improves upon every shortcoming found in the original. Even the plot avoids formulaic expectations by replacing Leo with Dingo Egret, a former BAHRAM pilot and grizzled veteran. Dingo's plight adds a level of maturity to the story and it aids the sequel significantly. The graphics have been improved, the controls tightened, and a greater variety of power ups, enemies, and locations were thrown into the mix. *The 2nd Runner* could very well be one of the best mecha games ever created with its unique blend of gameplay, though it didn't fare as well as the original *Zone* did upon initial release. Prior to the *HD Collection* hitting shelves, *The 2nd Runner* had become a hard-to-find title for the PlayStation 2.

The *HD Collection* is a must own for mecha fans, if only for a shot at playing *The 2nd Runner* in high-definition. It's a rare chance to actually *feel* like you're piloting a giant robot, an experience only rivaled by *Mobile Suit Gundam: Encounters in Space* also originally released for the PS2. The re-release also includes a newly animated intro which is pretty neat, but probably won't warrant more than a viewing or two.

The *Zone of the Enders HD Collection* was released back in October 2012, but it's worth the review since it received very little fanfare due to blockbuster game releases like *Assassins Creed 3*. A collector's edition was also made available that included a softbound artbook and a CD soundtrack loaded with remixes. Word of warning for PlayStation 3 owners, some gamers reported that the PS3 version of the *HD Collection* was marred by a slogging framerate. I've personally had no issues when playing and, if such an issue was prevalent, one of the latest update patches may have fixed it.

Reviewed by
Stuart Kelly

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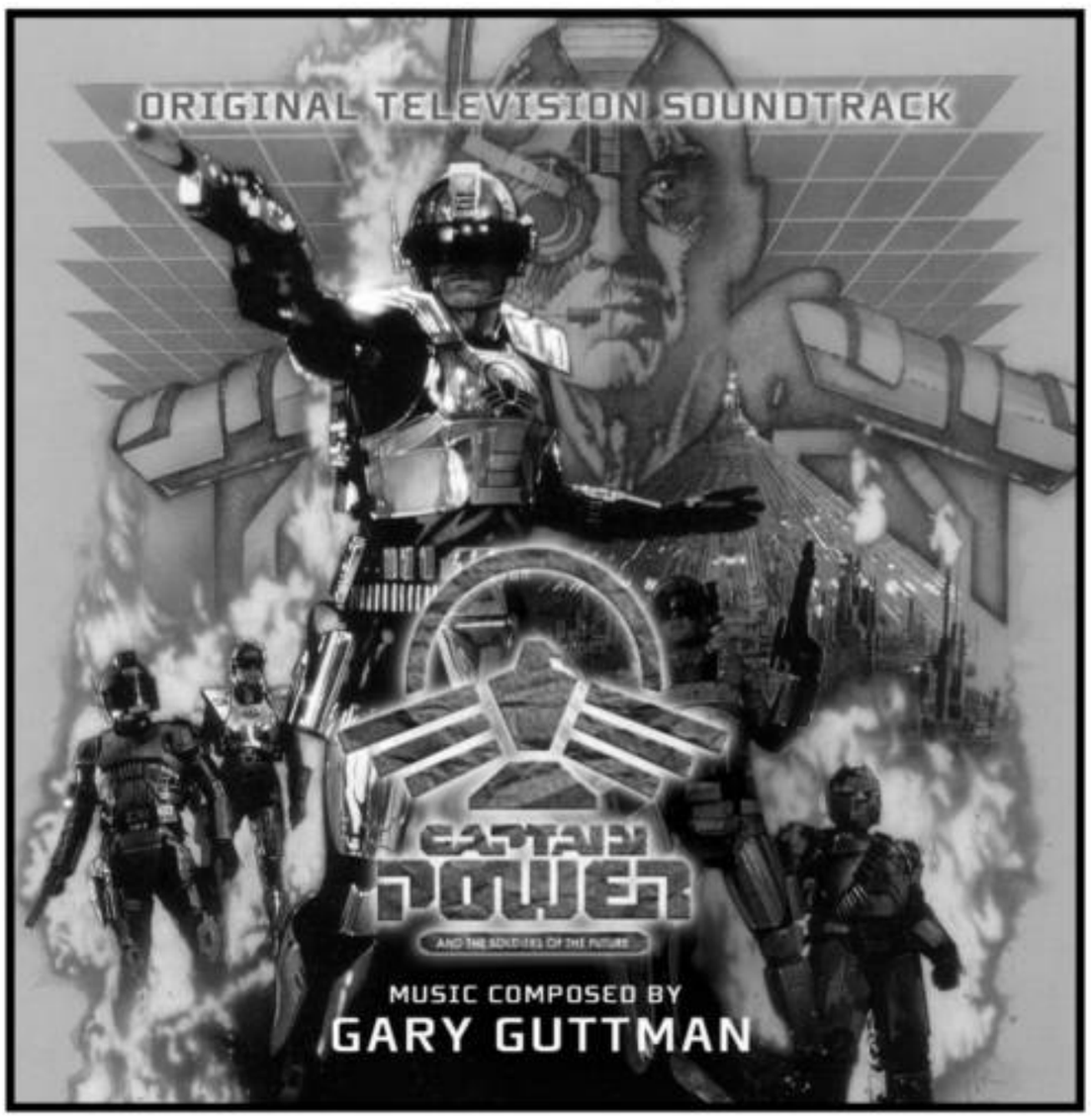
MUSIC:

CAPTAIN POWER AND THE SOLDIERS OF THE FUTURE: ORIGINAL TELEVISION SOUNDTRACK

Goddard Film Group; 2012



MUSIC OF THE FUTURE

Captain Power and the Soldiers of the Future was an entirely different breed of kids' programming compared to what had been airing on television in 1987; it was the first to combine live-action with computer-generated imagery. The story lines were more mature than what most kids were accustomed to on Saturday mornings – *Captain Power* had all the makings of a cult classic and, fortunately, its remarkable legacy survives today. Perhaps that's because *Captain Power* wasn't really a 'kid's show' per se, as much as it was a *pure* science fiction saga.

With the complete series being released on DVD in 2011, fans both old and new were given the chance to relive the ever-enthralling exploits of Jonathan Power (Tim Dunigan) as he combats Lord Dread and his mechanical Bio Dread Empire in the year 2147. One of the many impressive aspects of the show, aside from the special effects, was the soundtrack composed by Gary Guttman. Thanks to Gary Goddard, the show's creator and director of 1987's *Masters of the Universe* live-action film, the *Captain Power* soundtrack has been given a release worthy of its name.

Spanning 41 minutes and comprised of 40 tracks, Guttman's score is a strikingly powerful display of what the show offered in terms of maturity and sophistication. Included with the soundtrack is a 14-page booklet chronicling how Guttman created, composed, recorded, and edited the music. It's a welcome addition that serves as an informative account of how the series' score was put together. While full orchestral scores are something not typically associated with television programming – especially those aimed at Saturday morning time slots – *Captain Power* was given the full treatment and it's wholly evident. The irony is that Guttman composed the entire soundtrack without seeing a single frame of the show, only using the 3 minute promo intended to sell the series. The booklet also comes with Guttman's liner notes regarding his "Top Ten Captain Power Cues".

Aside from the first track – the only one to feature vocals (the narrator's dialogue that introduced every episode) – all tracks are instrumental and the diverse range of themes is quite remarkable. From the unyielding military-sounding percussions of "Get Ready" to the haunting melancholy touches of "Love Theme", all the way to the bombastically epic "Big Battle", track after track imparts the listener with one heck of a ride. Whether it's the majestically heroic to a grim foreboding, Guttman really poured his musical talents into this soundtrack, weaving a tonal tapestry that evokes grandeur not found in most of today's scores. To cap it off, the last track is titled "Captain Power Opening 2012 Version" where Guttman tries his hand at an electronica-styled theme that offers a more 'modernized' vibe.

Those familiar with *Captain Power* owe it to themselves to check out this original television soundtrack – and even those *not* acquainted with the show, but are admirers of John Williams and Jerry Goldsmith's iconic scores, are recommended to give this a listen as well. You won't regret it. Power on!

Reviewed by Andrew Parietti

BOOKS:

MUSIQUE FANTASTIQUE: 100 YEARS OF FANTASY, SCIENCE FICTION & HORROR FILM MUSIC

Creature Features; 2012, 518 pages; 2nd Edition, Author: Randall D. Larson

BOLDLY GOING WHERE NO BOOK HAS GONE BEFORE

Ever stumble across something so unique and exciting that you just *need* to tell everyone about it? Let's face it – in this day and age it seems more difficult to find that proverbial 'diamond in the rough', so if one does appear the glow can often be blinding. As many of us can attest, when it comes to horror, sci-fi and fantasy genres there's no shortage of books that cover the magic of special effects, the decades of movie poster art, or extensive behind-the-scenes history. Many of these books provide excellent fodder for genre fans to feast on – but just as many also cover the same old information. However, for the discerning fan that's eager to get their hands on a book that examines an entirely *different* aspect of the genres, look no further than Randall D. Larson's *Musique Fantastique*!

Horror, sci-fi and fantasy have had quite an impact on cinema, along with turning substantial profit. Sadly a valuable aspect of these genres is often overlooked –

the film score. Imagine John Carpenter's *Halloween* without its iconic theme, or consider the lack of John Williams' music in *Star Wars* or *Superman.* Music is the lifeblood of these genres, and while it's an important aspect to almost any film of any kind, it is sci-fi, fantasy – and especially horror – that require their musical scores to hook, awe and even frighten audiences.

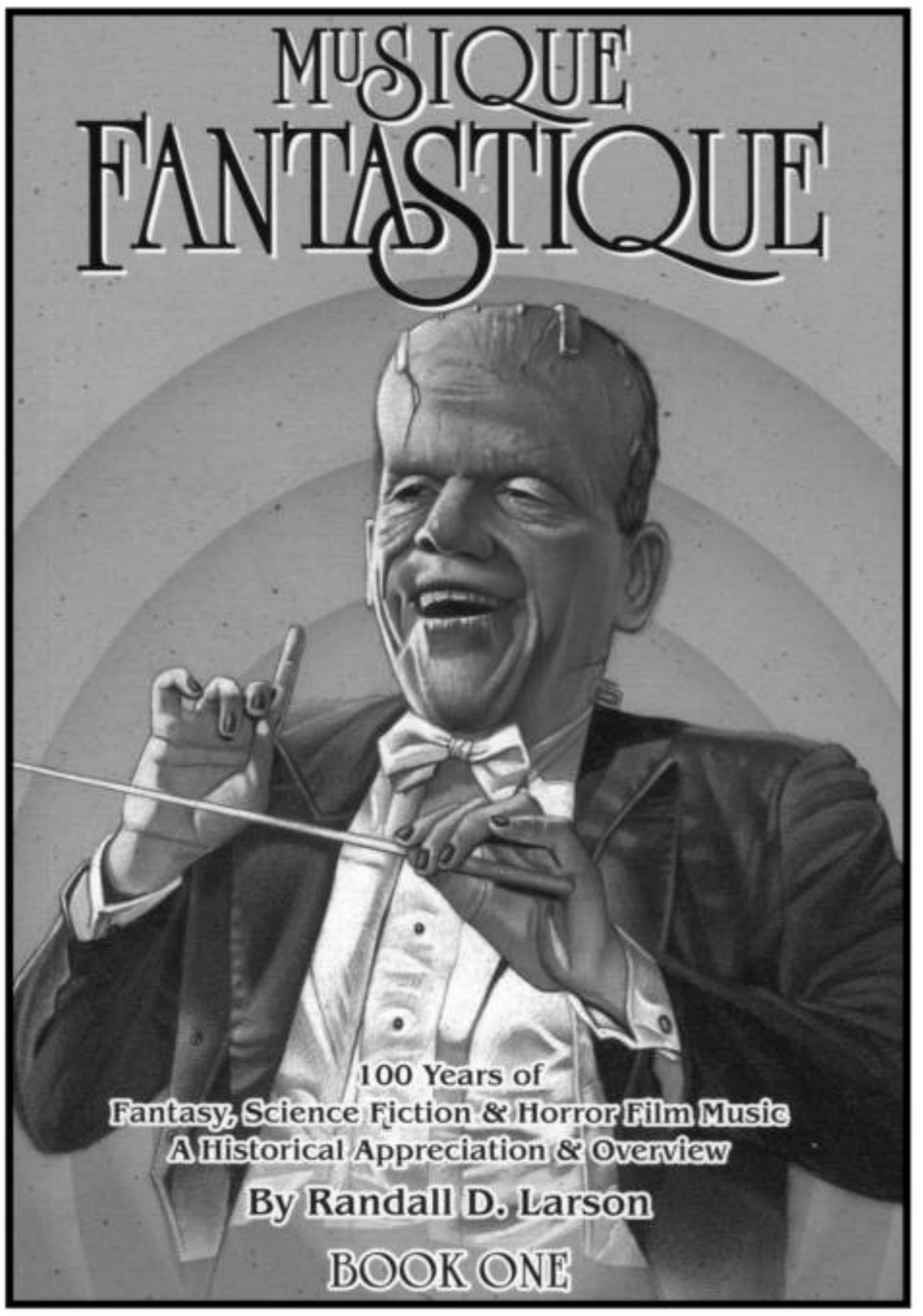
The irony is that few authors have covered this impressive facet of cinema. Thankfully, Larson's *Musique Fantastique* more than makes up for it. The breadth of material covered here is quite astounding, with chapters analyzing the dawn of silent cinema to its impact on future film scores. As expected, the Universal Monsters receive their due and many of these individual classic horror films are looked at with regards to their often diverse soundtracks. There's a great little aside where Larson writes about the Universal serials – many of which had their entire scores comprised of tracks taken from the studio's existing music library (with one of the exceptions being *Flash Gordon*).

A chapter dealing with fantasy film music of the '30s and '40s was a fanciful journey into another often neglected domain of celluloid music. The achievements of composer Max Steiner are really brought to light here, especially with his magnificent work on *King Kong* (1933). Larson later moves his way up to the '50s sci-fi film scores, including such mainstays as *The Thing from Another World* (1951), *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), and *Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954). Another chapter titled 'Big Bugs and Outer Space' takes a look at the atomic era of Hollywood's greatest nuclear-induced mutations and the soundtracks that fueled their rampages.

One of my favorite chapters was 'Giant Invasions', highlighting the career of Akira Ifukube, composer of many Godzilla, and related kaiju, films. Other Japanese composers are covered in detail too, and it was nice to see more obscure titles get recognition like *Latitude Zero* (1969), *Half Human* (1958), and the *Ultra Q* (1965) television series. I never thought I would be reading a book – in English, anyway – that would so exceptionally discuss these Japanese film scores. Larson even included the English lyrics to the Mothra song – a small but, for this reader at least, very pleasing addition. Unlike the rousing film scores of the Godzilla movies, I've never given much thought to the music of the Gamera entries, but I've since gained a new appreciation and respect for the composers of the giant turtle's various exploits.

Another noteworthy chapter explores television's infancy and the music of early TV shows like *Light's Out*, *Suspense*, and *Rocky Jones Space Ranger*. Again, it's great how Larson gives proper recognition to these lesser-known entries, while also managing to go into extraordinary detail regarding the scores of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *The Twilight Zone*, *Thriller*, *The Outer Limits, Lost in Space* and many more. Much to my surprise, Larson even hits upon the made-for-television *Doctor Strange* (1978) movie and discusses its score – again, going to show the extremely wide range of work this book covers!

The amount of effort and research that went into *Musique Fantastique* is incredible. Page after page



is packed with a bounty of fascinating information – far more than I would have ever imagined. While I enjoy film scores, I'm far from an aficionado on the subject. Truth be told, I was unsure just how much *Musique Fantastique* would appeal to me, outside of some intriguing tidbits here and there. I honestly expected to be skipping around, avoiding some chapters here and there that might not have piqued my interest. *Was I ever wrong!* From the first page to the very last my utmost attention had been captured. Larson deserves a wealth of praise, his writing is accessible and never bogs the reader down with technical musical jargon that would fly over the average layman's head.

Originally released in 1985, *Musique Fantastique* had been long out-of-print. Fortunately, thanks to Larson and publisher Creature Features, *Musique Fantastique* has been given a new lease on life with a completely revised and updated volume. And that's not all, this is only 'Book One', three more volumes are scheduled to be released in the near future! 2013's shaping up to be a great year already!

I simply can not recommend *Musique Fantastique* enough. It exceeded my every expectation and deepened my admiration for film scoring and the music of horror, sci-fi and fantasy cinema. *Musique Fantastique* was one of those rare exceptions where, upon reaching the end of the book, I literally felt the urge to tell every genre fan I know to get a copy, pronto. If you're planning on getting only one film-related book this year, make it this one – you won't regret it!

Reviewed by Frank Warden

DUEL REVIEWS:

VS.

BY WILLIAM BIBBIANI

CraveOnline film channel editor and host of the B-Movies Podcast

I'm not sure a faithful Judge Dredd movie could have found an audience in America pre-9/11. The character's embrace of fascist law enforcement is based on a combination of totalitarian practicality and right-wing fearmongering, the kind of "truthy" justification for dismissing due process that our namby-pamby liberal society would have rejected as unrealistically cynical (or worse, dangerously subversive) until the past decade, when societal paranoia and overt xenophobia became, if not common, then at least a plausible exaggeration of our recent national state of mind. As proof, I present Exhibit A: 1995's *Judge Dredd*, starring Sylvester Stallone and directed by Danny Cannon, and Exhibit B: *Dredd 3D*, starring Karl Urban and directed by Pete Travis.

Despite some superficial similarities in costume design and character, there could not be two more different adaptations of a comic book on record. I am, to be clear, including *Batman & Robin* and *The Dark Knight* in this comparison. At least Joel Schumacher's movie accepted that there *was* a Batman. *Judge Dredd* spends its entire running time apologizing for its hero's existence, as if the studio was simply ashamed to be bringing the comic book character to life in the first place. Travis's *Dredd* accepts not just the hero but also his ideology, as problematic as it might be. You may disagree with a totalitarian justice system but, unironically, it's not your place to judge. This is the world you are given in *Dredd 3D*, whether you like it or not.

Judge Dredd, on the other hand, exerts all of its energy repudiating the politics of John Wagner and Carlos Ezquerra's comic book series. In Danny Cannon's film we are introduced to the world of Mega-City One, where the whole of society lives because a nuclear apocalypse has rendered the rest of the planet uninhabitable. Keeping law and order in this densely populated super-structure (which does, to its credit, still have a successful chain of Jack in the Boxes) is so paramount that the police department calls its beat cops "judges," because they're given the authority to both arrest and sentence lawbreakers on the spot. The most feared judge of all is Judge Dredd, played by Sylvester Stallone, who completely embraces the word of the law

and must, presumably to appease the politically correct audiences of the 1990s, learn a valuable lesson about due process and friendship before the movie is through.

For whatever reason, Rob Schneider is not only in *Judge Dredd* but is also frequently blamed for its suckiness (if you'll forgive the technical jargon). Schneider plays a recent parolee who is sent immediately back to jail by Dredd for stumbling into a firefight and hiding in – and therefore vandalizing – public property. While yes, Rob Schneider spends the bulk of the film acting like Rob Schneider (generally considered a bad idea), the real issue is the function his character serves in the plot, namely shaming, and by extension later humanizing, Judge Dredd, who winds up framed for murder and sitting next to Schneider on a prison transport, helpless to stop Schneider from waxing rhapsodic about the failures of the justice system Dredd still claims to blindly support.

The law doesn't make mistakes, Dredd claims, prompting Schneider to ask how Dredd could have been wrongly convicted if that were the case. Rather than stick up for himself, and justify his convictions with a reasonable philosophical response (surely Dredd would believe that it's better for one innocent man to be imprisoned than hundreds to go free in a society that is, by necessity, micromanaged by the government), he's forced to admit that Schneider is right. And *no one* should ever have to admit that Rob Schneider is right.

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The main plot of 1995's *Judge Dredd* focuses on a political conspiracy to wrest control of Mega-City One and replace the legion of faithful judges with a legion of faithful clones of Armand Assante, who is himself a clone of Judge Dredd, who is himself a clone. Why is Judge Dredd a clone? Because that's the only reason why any person could divorce himself from his emotions and prioritize law and order over human compassion and friendship, apparently. Nobody could *possibly* believe that fascism was the right way to go, particularly in a comic book movie, and particularly if they're the hero, so *Judge Dredd* runs rings around itself to make Dredd the object of pity rather than a hero with a complex philosophy. The film's aggressively simplistic dialogue and outlandish production design (Stallone's codpiece makes David Bowie's *Labyrinth* get-up look conservative) only cements the film's attempts to simplify the character and his world for audiences who, surely, could not have possibly accepted the story for

what it is. Was *Judge Dredd* made for kids? Certainly, since *Judge Dredd* was a comic book movie in the post Tim Burton *Batman* era, but more importantly it was made for their parents, who could not be marketed a comic book movie that might be inappropriate for their youngsters.

Pete Travis's *Dredd 3D*, on the other hand, expects you to accept Judge Dredd's world so readily that they barely establish it, plunking you right in the middle of Mega-City One and in the middle of Dredd's daily routine. Whereas *Judge Dredd* gives the hero a brief mission to establish his status quo, namely killing James Remar (the only possible way to make a hero in a giant gold codpiece seem like a badass), before telling a story that questions and upheaves the entire world of the character, *Dredd 3D* feels no need to encapsulate the entire society of the film within its running time. The effect is like reading a standalone issue of the comic book without catching up on anything that preceded it. You're not missing anything, you're just expected to accept everything *Dredd 3D* presents as the reality of Mega-City One. As a result, you do accept it, unlike in the original film, which spends 96 minutes apologizing for being made in the first place.

The story of *Dredd 3D* finds Judge Dredd, played by Karl Urban, breaking in a new recruit, Judge Anderson, played by Olivia Thirlby. She seems particularly fresh-faced because she never wears her judge's helmet. It interferes with her psychic abilities, which are the only reason why she's been given the opportunity to be Dredd's partner in the first place after barely failing her exams. In contrast, Judge Dredd never takes his helmet off, a symbol of his commitment to protocol as well as his embodiment of the judicial system. Dredd is never humanized, although he is clearly human in biology. Stallone's Dredd spends most of the film without his helmet, partially because they paid for Sylvester Stallone and thus needed to actually *show* Sylvester Stallone, but mostly because they needed to show that he's really a good person who just needs friends and compassion to be happy.

Urban's Dredd is never happy. A basic tenet of strong storytelling is that any character who is good at their job – be they good, bad or morally compromised – immediately earns the audience's respect. In *Dredd 3D*, Judge Dredd qualifies. His reaction to the film's primary storyline, in which he and Anderson are trapped in a 200-story skyscraper and forced to fight off its thousands of

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inhabitants, is stoicism. Just another day at the office, no matter how high the stakes have been raised. The building has been sealed off by Ma-Ma, played by Lena Headey as a scarred former prostitute who now runs a powerful drug ring from the top floors. Dredd and Anderson have arrested one of her lieutenants and must be killed before they can force him to testify against her.

Simple, efficient storytelling and, while coincidentally reminiscent to *The Raid* (a thrilling Indonesian action movie from earlier this year, with a similar, albeit non-sci-fi set up), also superior thanks to a more intriguing cast of characters and pace that occasionally lets up, allowing later action sequences to carry the same dramatic weight as the earlier ones. *Judge Dredd*'s action sequences, in contrast to *Dredd 3D*'s, are often random in their conception, forcing the hero to square off against cannibal *Road Warrior* knock-offs for no other pertinent reason than to fill time, and a handful of half-formed zombie clones.

Dredd's female companions in each film are also distinctly different. Judge Hershey, played by Diane Lane, is allowed to be more than a love interest in *Judge Dredd*, because she ably defends Dredd in court and uncovers the government conspiracy, but is later relegated to the object of kissing and only permitted to fight the film's only other female character, played by Joan Chen and introduced late in the film as an apparent afterthought, presumably just for this purpose. Olivia Thirlby, as the rookie, is given the film's surrogate emotional response to callous justice, hesitating at the thought of dispensing death sentences. Which makes it all the more intriguing that she goes through with it anyway. By this point she, and the audience, has come to understand that the world of *Dredd 3D* is sufficiently violent and corrupt that authoritative and authoritarian action is a practical response. Because she accepts this, the audience does as well, and her character is bolstered as a complex individual as a result.

The matter-of-factness to *Dredd 3D* makes it truly compelling filmmaking, easy to engage with and rich enough to warrant close analysis. *Judge Dredd* was, let's be honest, made for children, or at least adult audiences to be condescended to like children. It's a product of a simpler era of comic book adaptations, in which complexity was traded for overt style, which the *Blade Runner*-esque Mega-City One admittedly had with surprising detail. I suspect that with a name change, disassociating 1995's *Judge Dredd* from the comic book property, the film could be accepted as modest camp entertainment, a less enthralling but capable *Flash Gordon* for the 1990s. As a Judge Dredd movie, however, it falls dramatically short.

Watching them together is an illuminating experience that brings into focus just how far comic book adaptations, and the culture to which they are marketed, has come in the last decade and a half. I can't say that I entirely recommend *Judge Dredd*, but if ever there was a reason to watch it, a double feature with Pete Travis's superior cinematic interpretation of the comic book is it.

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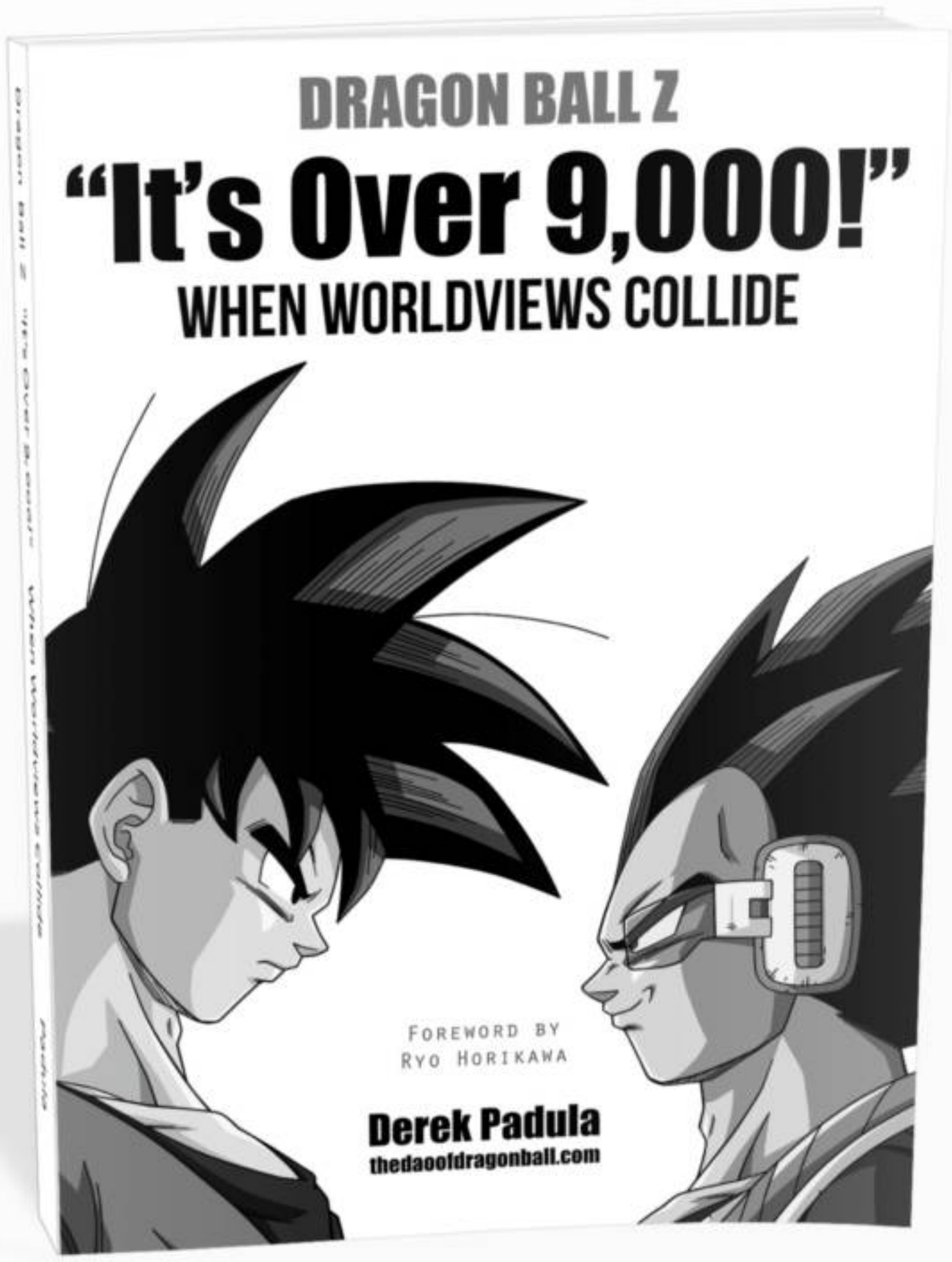

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BATMAN UNAUTHORIZED

Compiled by a veteran writer of the comic series, this collection of essays explores Batman's motivations and actions, as well as those of his foes. Batman is a creature of the night, more about vengeance than justice, more plagued by doubts than full of self-assurance, and more darkness than light. He has no superpowers, just skill, drive, and a really well-made suit. One of the most recognized superheroes ever created, Batman has survived through campy TV shows and films, through actors like Adam West, Michael Keaton, and Christian Bale. It covers both the silly and the solemn, asking questions like *Why is the Joker so good at pushing Batman's buttons? What does Batman's technology say about the times? Why are Batman's villains crazier than average?* and *Why is Batman the perfect, iconic American hero?*

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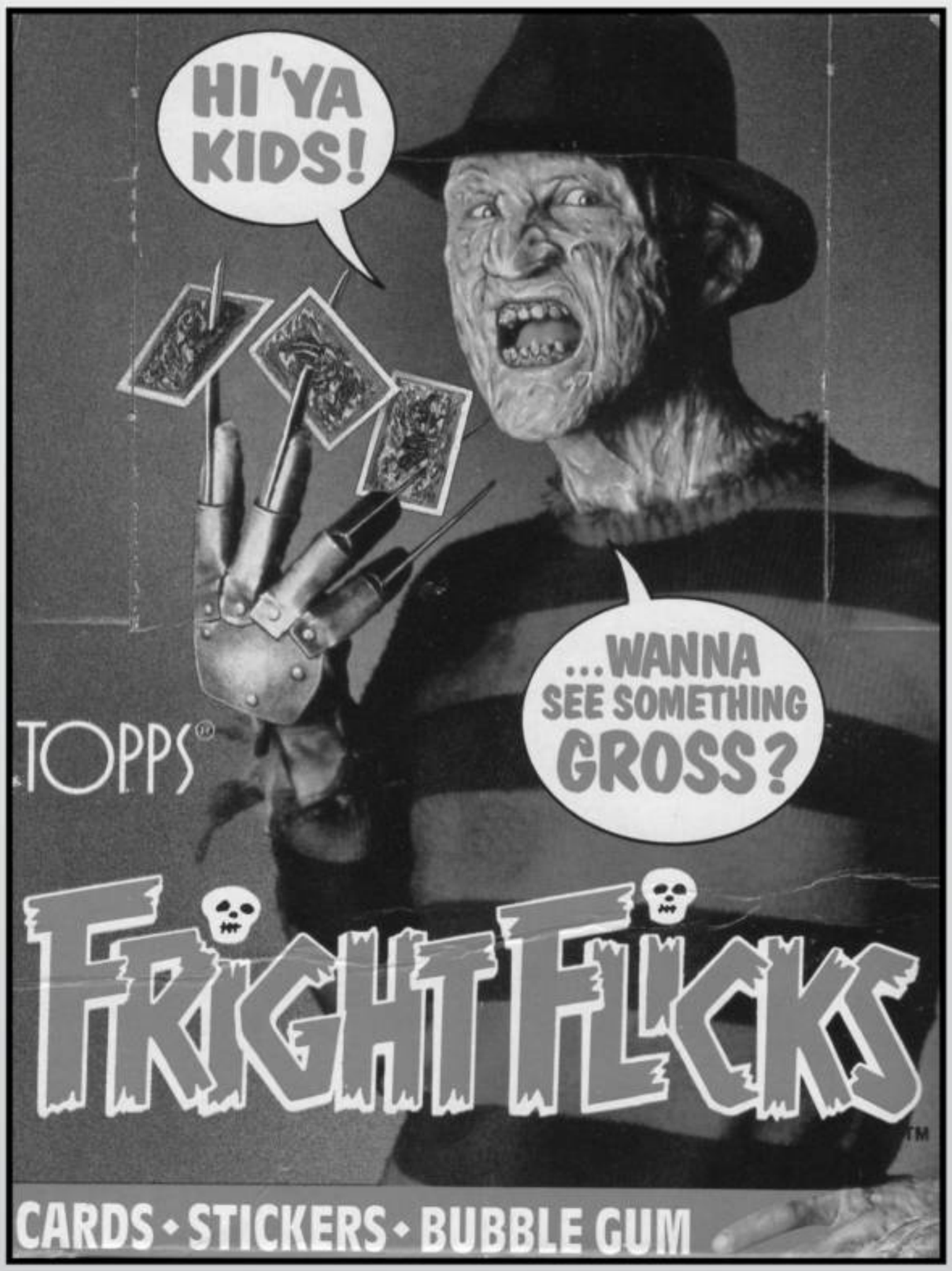
MIDDLE EARTH COLLECTIBLES

REMEMBERING TOPPS' FRIGHT FLICKS TRADING CARDS

By Stan Fuller

The '80s were a great time for horror fans. New *Friday the 13th*, *Nightmare on Elm Street*, and *Halloween* films were being released every couple of years, the movies became available for the first time on VHS, and Topps had released their *Fright Flicks* trading cards!



The Topps company started out in 1938, at that time they were in the market of selling Bazooka bubblegum exclusively. It wasn't until the 1950s when Topps stepped into the trading card business by manufacturing baseball cards. Their new venture was a huge success and, to capitalize on the profits, they expanded with hockey, football, and basketball cards (Topps was also the first company to put bubblegum gum inside trading card packs).

By the late '50s and early '60s Topps had added a few non-sports related trading card lines to their catalog, including a series on The Beatles, John F. Kennedy, and – most interesting to horror enthusiasts – *Funny Monsters*, which featured cartoonish parodies of the classic silver-screen monsters with humorous text. Legendary artists like Jack Davis, Wally Wood, and Bob Powell contributed to the *Funny Monsters* cards.

Topps was also responsible for the controversial *Mars Attacks* series in 1962. At the time they were heavily criticized for the graphic violence depicted on many of the sci-fi themed cards.

Right: **A Topps' *Funny Monsters* card.**
Below: **An infamous *Mars Attacks* trading card.**

As the years went on Topps also released the *Garbage Pail Kids* trading cards that would later inspire a 1987 feature film. By 1993 Topps had tried their hand at the comic book market, creating comics based on *Friday the 13th*, *Zorro*, *Xena*, *Mars Attacks*, and *The X-Files*. Their comic division folded in 1998.

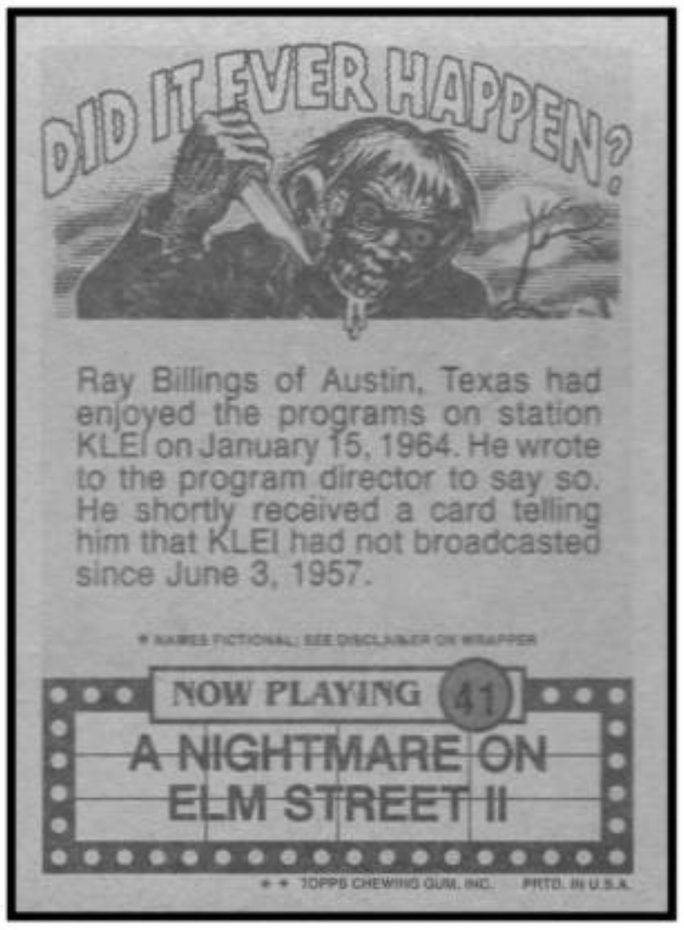
But let's go back to 1985, when Topps released their *Fright Flicks* series of trading cards. Each *Fright Flick* card presented an image from a then-current horror film with a humorous tagline. The back of each card featured a "Did It Ever Happen?" story, a type of Ripley's Believe It Or Not scenario concerning 'supernatural' events that may or may not have actually occurred.

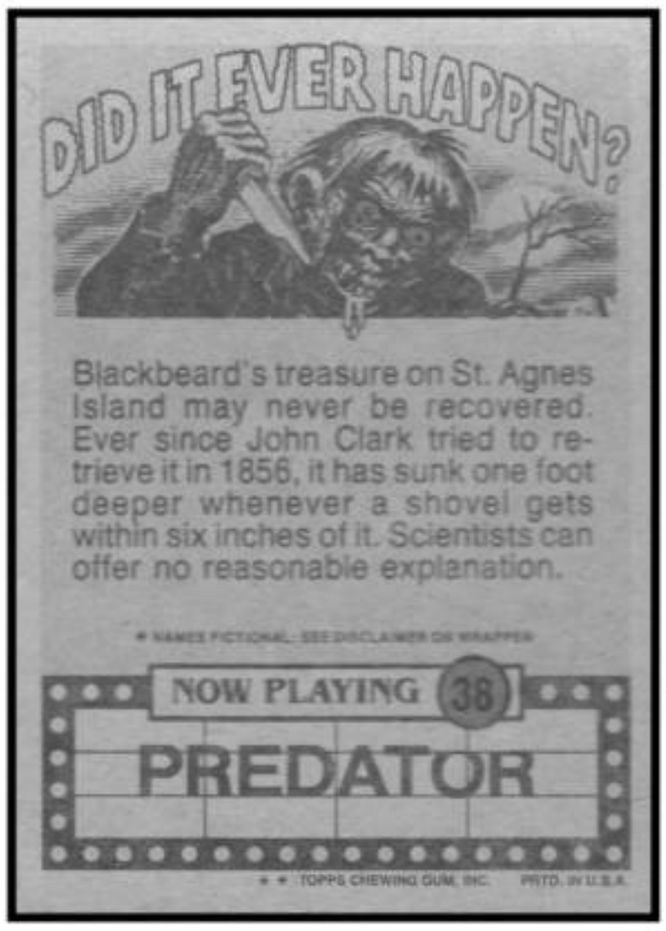
Each pack of *Fright Flicks* came with 9 cards, 1 sticker, and 1 stick of bubble gum. Interestingly, the back of each sticker-card was a type

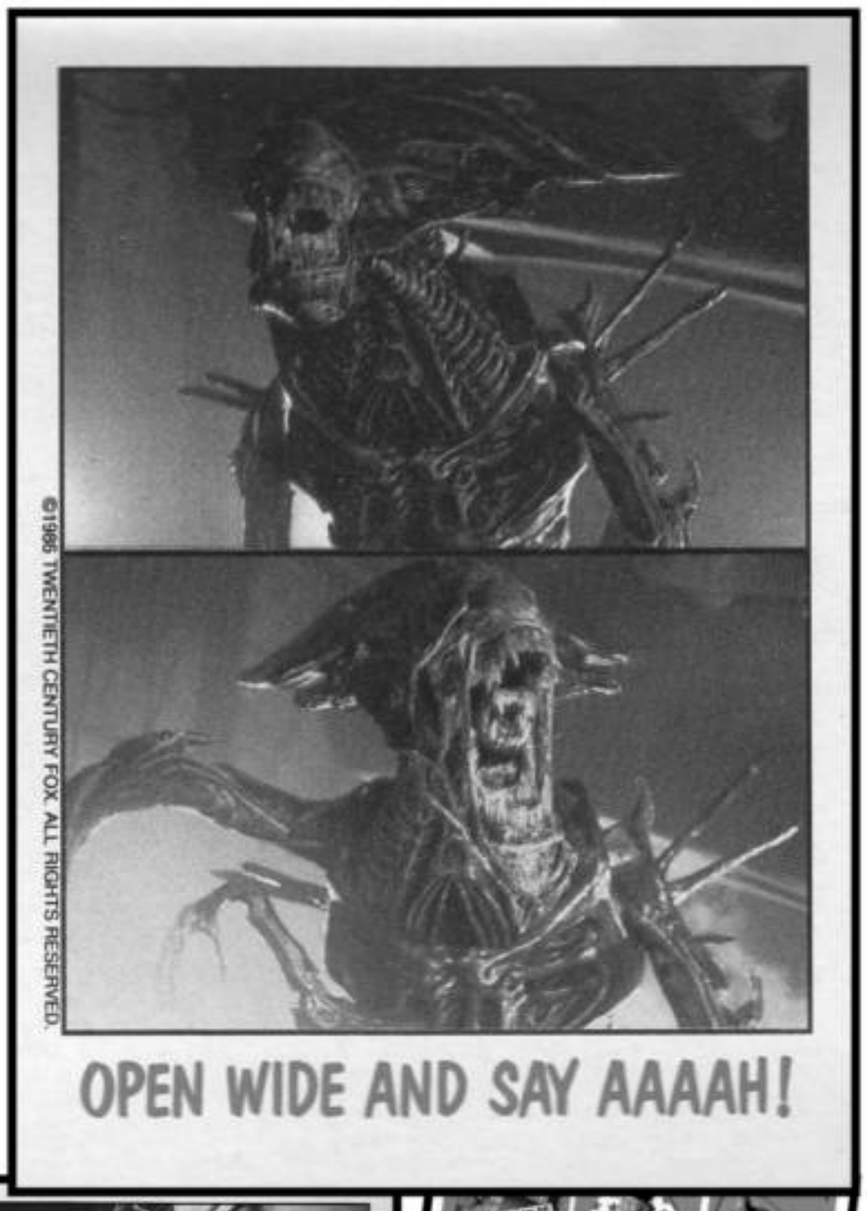
of 'puzzle piece' that created a larger picture when put together with other pieces.

Overall, there were 90 different cards in the series with 11 different stickers. Four varieties of card packaging existed, one with Freddy Krueger, one with the Predator, another with Pumpkinhead, and yet another with Amy – the female vampire from *Fright Night*.

There were rumors that some stores had to take *Fright Flicks* off the shelves due to the complaints of 'concerned' parents who were shocked by the graphic nature and mature themes of the trading cards.

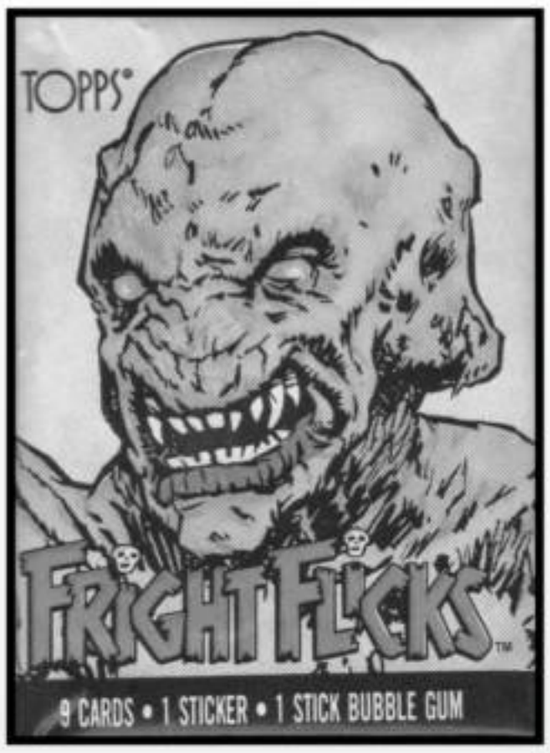


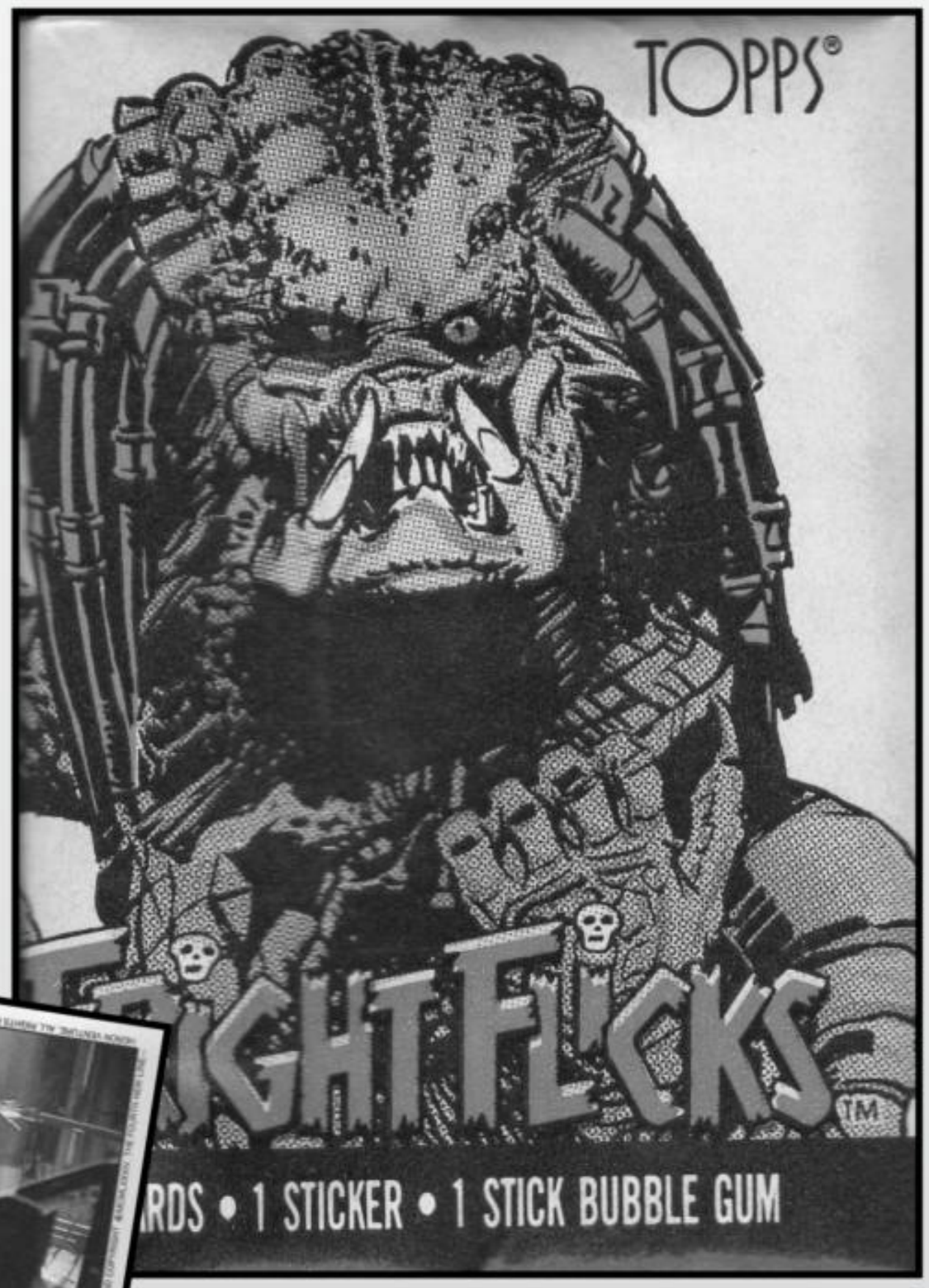




However, for fans of the horror genre, these cards are a collector's dream come true!

The movies featured on the *Fright Flicks* trading cards were: *Alien*, *Aliens*, *An American Werewolf In London*, *Day of the Dead*, *Ghostbusters*, *Fright Night*, *Pumpkinhead* (referred to as *Vengeance: The Demon*), *The Fly*, *Predator*, *Poltergeist 1* & *2*, and *A Nightmare On Elm Street 1*, *2*, & *3*.





DAVEY HORROR'S COLLECTOR'S CORNER

CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON

This time around Davey Horror takes a journey to the darkest recesses of the Amazon with his custom *Creature from the Black Lagoon* display piece. Reaching out from the depths of his murky lagoon, the Creature is a sight to behold in this impressive one-of-a-kind scene.

The Gill-Man here came from the mid '80s line of Billiken vinyl model kits. The lower body was removed, while the wooden base had been painted to look like water (dried Elmer's Glue gave the rippling appearance surrounding the Creature and log). The log itself was simply found outside and the lagoon's flora were plastic fish tank plants acquired at the local pet store.